

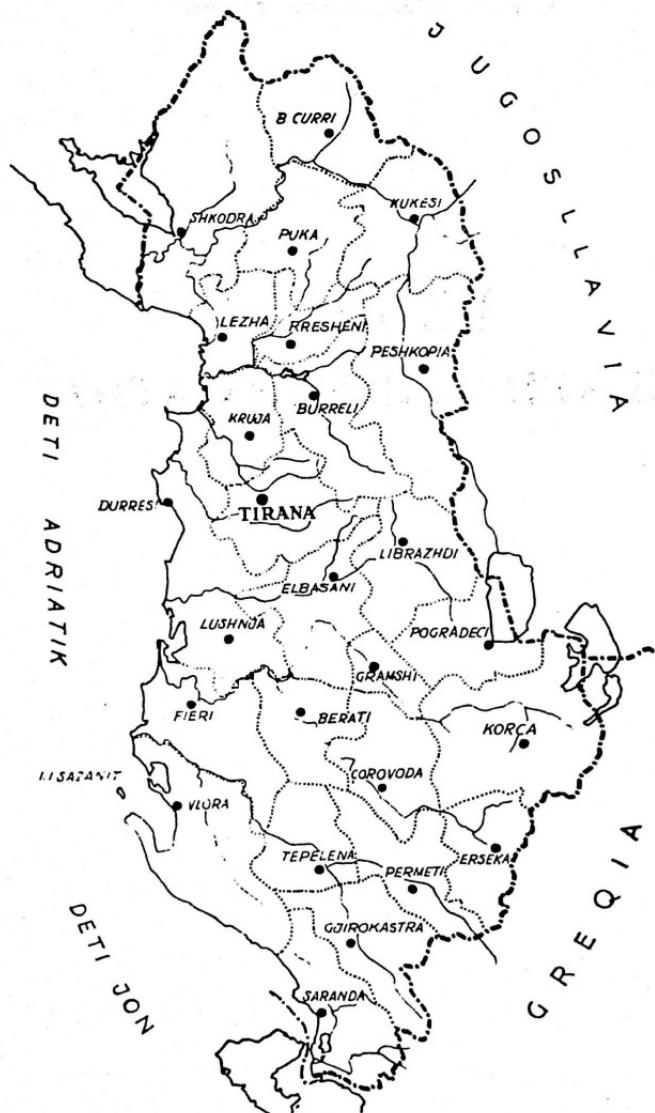
# **ALBANIA**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**





**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**



**ALBANIA**

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**NORMAN BETHUNE INSTITUTE  
TORONTO, 1977**

## Publisher's Note

The present edition, published by the Norman Bethune Institute, is taken from a pamphlet entitled "Albania General Information", published in 1976 by *New Albania*, an illustrated political and social magazine published in Tirana. The address of the Editorial Board of *New Albania* is;

R. Labinoti 7,  
Tirana, Albania

Published by:

**NORMAN BETHUNE INSTITUTE**

Printed by:

**PEOPLE'S CANADA PUBLISHING HOUSE**

Distributed by:

**NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS CENTRE**

*Distributors of Progressive Books & Periodicals*

**Box 727, Adelaide St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

**ISBN 0 8803 034 7**

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# ALBANIA

## I.

### Geographical Position, Size, Borders, Natural Resources

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania extends over an area of 28,748 square kilometres. It lies on the western side of the Balkan Peninsula and along the coastline of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. To the north and northeast, Albania is bound by Yugoslavia and to the south and southeast by Greece.

#### RELIEF

Albania is mainly a mountainous country in which 76.6 percent of its territory is mountains and hills over 200 metres above sea level, while the true plains under 200 metres above sea level occupy only 23.4 percent. The average altitude of Albania (708 m.) is about twice that of Europe.

The mountains are not very high, in the region of 2,000 m. and their maximum height does not exceed 2,751 m. The hills lie mainly on the western part of the territory. Most of them are not higher than 400 m. The plains below 200 metres above sea level are also in the western part of Albania. However there are also some plains in the interior of the country, either in the form of valleys (the plains of Elbasan and Dropulli), or in the form of depressions formed during the quaternary period (the Korça plain).

On the basis of the geological features of the territory and the structure of the relief, we distinguish four well characterized natural regions, namely the Alps of Albania, the Central Mountain Region, the Southern Mountain Region and the Western Lowlands.

The Albanian Alps, situated north of the Drini River, present the smallest natural unit, but also the most rugged mountain region of the territory because of their tectonic and geological structure, as well as of the intensive action of external forces.

Most of the Alps exceed 2,000 metres above sea level (the highest peak being that of Jezerca, 2,693 m.). There is a striking contrast between the mountains in the form of pyramids and the deep valleys between them which have the form of narrow gorges or deep hollows (the Thethi gorge, the Boga hollow and so on). Now, motor roads have been opened along the principal valleys leading to the heart of the Alps. From the point of view of nature, the Alps make up an important scenic region with typical alpine landscapes. Tall forests and alpine pasturelands make up the principal surface resources of this region.

The Central Mountain Region, which lies between the Drini Valley in the north and the central Devoll and the lower Ossum valleys in the south, is quite different. The forms of its relief are less rugged, not only because of the prevalence of magmatic formations, but also because of the less intensive action of external forces. Like the Alps, the mountains of the Central Mountain Region are also covered with dense forests; but because of some wider valleys, agriculture is of greater importance here than in the alpine region. The Central Mountain Region is characterized by its great underground riches with minerals like chromium, iron, nickel and copper. The Central Mountain Region is rich in big lakes of tectonic origin (the Ohri and Prespa lakes) and in smaller glacial lakes (the Lura, Martaneshi and other lakes) as well as in flowing waters which impart special beauty to this region.

The Southern Mountain Region, lying south of the Central Mountain Region, presents a more regular tectonic form, which is characterized by an alternation of limestone mountain ranges and valleys of chalky sandstones and shales. Most of the ranges rise 2,000 m. above sea level with some of them nearly 2,500 m. high (the Pepingu summit 2,495 metres), but there are also valleys below sea level (the Delvina basin). Towards the west, the ranges of mountains of the Southern Mountain Region, run right down to the Ionian coast, along which lies the Albanian Riviera with its mild Mediterranean climate and landscape. The arable land is concentrated in valleys and on the hillsides, terracing of the land being more typical here than in the other part of the territory.

In the western part of the territory, along the Adriatic sea coast, lie the Western Lowlands, the only true lowland plains.

This area extends over a distance of 200 kilometres from north to south and eastward up to 50 kilometres into the interior of the country. It is characterized by little slope. For this reason the subsoil waters are near the surface and the rivers meander widely along shallow courses. Along the seaboard there are many lagoons, strips of sand and dunes. The sand strips form beaches which extend for kilometres along the coast where bathing centres, which are frequented more and more by the workers of the country, have been set up (Shëngjin, Durrës, Vlora and Saranda). Before liberation, the lowlands of the Adriatic seaboard were covered with marshes and swamps, and little used for cultivation. But, with the establishment of the people's state power and thanks to big land improvement projects and the straightening, deepening and stop-banking of river beds, the marshes and swamps have been drained and turned into arable land. On the other hand, the construction of an extensive network of irrigation canals and reservoirs has solved the problem of irrigating the lands under cultivation.

The hills which rise in the middle of the Western Lowlands have been formed by relatively new folding of the earth's crust. They are covered with Mediterranean shrubs which are increasingly being replaced by vineyards and blocks of olive, citrus and fruit trees systematized in terraces.

As a result of the great work done during our people's state power, the Western Lowland Region has become the granary of our country and the most important region for industrial plants like cotton, sunflower and tobacco. Cattle raising, too, has undergone great development. Not only the rich agricultural resources, but also the mineral ones like petroleum, bitumen and coal, as well as the favourable geographical position and communications have favoured industrial activity here. For these reasons the Western Lowland Region is the most densely populated region in Albania.

### THE CLIMATE

Albania is situated in the Mediterranean climatic belt. But because of the mountainous character of the territory and, especially, of its many divisions, the climate varies from region to region. It is warmest in the western part of the territory which is mainly under the influence of the warm air masses from the sea.

Here the winter is moderate, the temperature rarely falling below zero. The summer is hot and, on some occasions, very hot (the maximum July temperature recorded is 44° C.), whereas, in the eastern part of Albania, which is mainly under the influence of the continental air masses, the winter is cold. Negative temperatures in winter are frequent and the minimum recorded is 26° C. below zero. The summer is hot in the valleys where the maximum July temperature is up to 35° C.

Rainfall in Albania is abundant (1,300 mm. a year) but irregularly distributed during the year. In general, summer is a dry season, receiving not more than 2.5 to 14 percent of the annual rainfall, while 40 percent falls in winter. Summer droughts are more pronounced towards the southwest. Most of the precipitation is in the form of rain. As a rule, snow falls in the interior of the territory and the mountains. Because of the divisions of the territory, the geographical distribution of rain is unequal. Average annual precipitation is over 2,000 mm. in the Alps in northern Albania and from 650 to 700 mm. in the valleys of the interior. Typical of Albania is the small amount of cloud for most of the year, with the sky almost always clear.

### HYDROGRAPHY

The territory of Albania is rich in rivers and streams. Because of the irregular rainfall and the very rugged relief, they are torrential with high erosive power and carry large amounts of alluvium. The rivers of Albania constitute an important source of hydro-electric power. During the years of our people's state power they began to be utilized with the building of a number of hydro-electric power-plants of different capacities. The most important in this regard is the Drini River, on which one hydro power-plant with a capacity of 250,000 KW has already been built; a higher one, with a capacity of 450,000 KW will soon be completed, and it is planned to build several others in the future. The rivers of the country are of major importance also for irrigation purposes. At present, more than 50 percent of the land under cultivation is irrigated mainly with the water from rivers and artificial reservoirs.

In the territory of Albania there are a number of lakes of varying origin: lakes of glacial origin in the highlands of which there are many lakes of Karst origin in the hills, and there are

many of these, too, tectonic lakes (the Shkodra, Ohri and Prespa lakes), which are the largest in size and most important for fishing; lakes of the lagoon type in the lowlands, which are large reserves for fishing. The lakes of the highlands and hills are used for irrigation purposes. In addition to these natural lakes, during the years of our people's state power, hundreds of artificial lakes have been built for irrigation and hydro-electric power purposes.

Such artificial lakes are those of Ulza, Shkopet, Vau i Dejës, Gjonci, Thana and others. With the building of the Fierza hydropower plant, a new artificial lake will be formed, which will inundate the old town of Kukës, which has already been replaced with the new town of Kukës. In addition to their economic importance, the lakes of Albania are also important scenic attractions.

The seacoast of Albania is 470 kilometres long and, besides navigation and fishing, it is a valuable tourist attraction both for the many beaches that lie along it and for its natural beauty.

### THE NATURAL RICHES OF THE LAND AND UNDERGROUND

The variable conditions of the relief, climate, hydrography and soil of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania account for the variety of its plant and animal life.

Thousands of different kinds of plants grow in the territory of Albania, which represent most of the flora of the Balkan Peninsula and, indeed, have links with plants of more distant flora. In general, the flora of the western part of the territory consist mainly of typical Mediterranean shrubs. In the inland regions broad-leaved trees such as beeches, together with conifers, predominate. About 3 percent of the plants in Albania occur only in particular regions. Forests cover nearly 40 percent of the surface of the territory. This great wealth began to be exploited rationally during the years of our people's state power, and feeds one of the most important branches of the country's industry — the timber and paper industries.

The fauna of Albania, also, is rich and varied. It is represented by such wild animals as the hare, fox, lynx, otter, bear, wolf, jackal, wild boar, wild goat, deer and others; by birds, such as partridge grouse, eagle, snipe, pheasant and others; and by water birds such as ducks, geese, pelicans and others. The many waters

of the territory abound in waterfowl.

Because of the great geological variability of the territory, there is a wide range of metallic and nonmetallic minerals, which are the source of one of the principal branches of the industry of our country and figure among the principal items of our exports. Among them the principal ones are the reserves of oil, natural gas, bitumen, lignite, iron-nickel, chromium and copper. Thanks to these riches, the industry of mining and processing has an ever more important position in the structure of our industry. In chromium mining, Albania ranks among the leading countries in Europe.

## II.

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY

The discoveries to date about the beginnings of human life on Albanian soil take us back to the end of the middle Paleolithic Age and the beginning of the Iron Age. Valuable materials of the prehistoric period have been found at Xara, Butrint and Finiq of the Saranda district, at the foot of Mt. Dajti in Tirana, at Gruemirë and Dukagjin of the Shkodra district and at Nepravishta in Gjirokastra district. Of special importance has been the discovery of the prehistoric centre of habitation at Maliq of Korça. This centre, which was discovered by workers while draining a swamp, is of special importance to the study of the prehistory of the Balkans.

The ancestors of the Albanians were the Illyrians. It is thought that during the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age, these people dwelt in Central Europe and, later, spread south to the western part of the Balkan Peninsula down to the Gulf of Arta (in northern Greece).

The Illyrians had their own language, but so far no written text has been found. A number of words quoted by ancient authors as well as many names of persons, centres of habitation, rivers, etc., are known. The first historical documents about the Illyrians begin from the 7th and 6th century before our era. On the basis of

various documents, the Illyrians enjoyed a relatively well developed economy and, as a consequence, a high level of culture and social organization. The development of the means of production brought about class differentiation within the tribes and among them. This led also to the subjugation of some tribes by others. The most important communities were the Enkeles, Taulants, Dardans, Liburnians, Ardians and so on. These changes brought about the establishment of the relations of slave ownership in the society of the Illyrian groups. Cities like Shkodra, Amantia (in the Vlora district), Bylis (in the Mallastra district), Finiq (in the Saranda district) etc. sprang up. From the beginning of the 4th century these cities minted their own coins. The federations of tribes later led to the setting up of Illyrian states. History speaks especially of the state of Enkelej (southeastern Albania), that of the Taulants in the coastal region as well as that of the Mollosi in the south down to the Gulf of Arta. These Illyrian states flourished during the 5th, 4th and 3rd centuries before our era. We find them in good relations with the neighbouring states as well as in relations of rivalry and war. At the head of these states stand out such political and military leaders as Bardhyl, Pyrrhus and Glauti.

During the 3rd century before our era there was also another outstanding Illyrian state, that of the Ardians, which extended from the Dalmatian coast to the south, subjugating the state of the Taulants. Shkodra became the capital of this kingdom. The state of the Ardians reached the peak of its power during the reign of King Agron, who died in the year 221 before our era, leaving his wife, Teuta, at the head of his kingdom. The state of the Ardians, which had succeeded in conquering Greek colony cities along the Adriatic coast and on a number of islands of the Adriatic, also became a naval power of considerable strength. This was very disturbing to Rome which at that time, was rising to the height of its power and intended to extend it to the eastern shores of the Adriatic and Ionian seas, and to conquer the Balkan Peninsula. This led to war in September of the year 229 before our era. The war between the Illyrians and the Romans continued up to 167 before our era when Rome succeeded in occupying the entire kingdom of the Ardians and those of Epirus and Macedonia. For the Illyrians a difficult period of five centuries of Roman bondage began. The invaders ransacked and

plundered nearly 100 cities and made slaves of over 150,000 men and women.

During the first centuries of Roman occupation, Illyria became the starting point of the main highways which linked Rome with the eastern provinces of the Empire. The occupationists tried to romanize the Illyrian regions, but the natives resisted romanization, especially the mountain tribes which became the bastion of the valuable traditions and priceless values of the spiritual creativeness of the people. The historians make mention of these tribes. Ptolemy, the historian of Alexandria, speaks also of the tribe of Albanoi, between present day Durrës and Dibra. The name Albania comes from this tribe (today the Albanians call their land Shqipëri (1)).

Frequent powerful uprisings, which shook Rome, broke out in Illyria. The uprising headed by the Illyrian leader Bato, set in motion about 200,000 Illyrians, who liberated many districts and made preparations to cross over to the Appennine Peninsula. In spite of this, the Illyrians took an active part in the political and social life of Rome. Rome considered the Illyrian military contingents as very reliable detachments in defending the borders from the onslaught of the barbarians. Many Illyrian military leaders even succeeded in being chosen as Emperor. History records seven Emperors of Illyrian origin, the most prominent of whom was Diocletian. Of course as the ruler of the Illyrian provinces for centuries on end, Rome also assimilated the physical and mental energies of the inhabitants of the occupied countries. Illyrian master craftsmen left their mark on the monumental works of Roman architecture, in arts and crafts and many other fields.

In 395 a.d. the Roman Empire was split into two parts. Illyria remained in the Eastern Empire. The conditions of its enslavement remained nearly as before, except that now the Illyrian provinces were no longer at the centre but on the western periphery of the Empire. At first this new situation exerted a positive influence on the economic and social development of the country. The Illyrian ports became important centres of trade, which linked the East with the West. Dyrrachium (Durrës of our time) reached the height of its prosperity. The same is true of Finiq in the south and other cities. Later, the Illyrian provinces, which lay in the western part of the Byzantine Empire, were the

first to have to face the furious onslaught of the so-called barbarian tribes, which came from the Appenine Peninsula or down the Dalmation coast. In the year 395 the horde of Visigoths headed by Alaric descended upon the Balkans plundering and devastating Ilyria, Macedonia and Greece. In 441, the Illyrian province of Dardania (present day Kosova) was overrun by the Huns under Attila, while the Ostrogoths came in 461. Towards the end of the 5th century, groups of Turanian-Bulgarian barbarians attacked the Byzantine Empire from the East and reached the Adriatic. These onslaughts continued during the 6th century. Especially during the 7th century groups of Slavs came and settled in the various districts of Albania. They created many villages and began to till the soil. In spite of this, the bulk of the population, which was made up of natives, was concentrated mainly in the rugged mountain regions and engaged in raising livestock. This colonization by the Slavs created a danger of its own, that of assimilation. But the natives overcame this danger, too. Thus they entered the mediaeval period under a new name, that of "Albani, Albanese".

During the 10th and 11th centuries, the old slave-owning system was in complete collapse in Albania, and now elements characteristic of the period of feudalism appeared. But social development was hampered by the ceaseless wars, by the oppressive measures of the Empire, and by the influx of foreigners. In 1082 Albania was invaded by the Normans. Fourteen years later, the hordes of the First Crusade passed through it. During the 12th century, it was again overrun by two Norman onslaughts.

During the 12th century, the feudal system had crystallized more clearly in the remote regions of Albania. A feudal nobility of purely Albanian origin was created in these zones. Gradually gaining strength, these nobles came into conflict with the power of the princes of the Byzantine and Slav occupations. The native feudal chiefs increasingly aimed at settling accounts with the foreigners and establishing an independent state. The opportunity presented itself towards the end of the 12th century when the Byzantine Empire was plunged into a deep political crisis. In 1190, the Albanian feudal chiefs set up an independent principality, the first Albanian feudal state we know of. This principality extended over Albinia, with Kruja as its capital.

However this principality could not be consolidated because of conflicts with the other feudal principalities and foreign powers at the time of the 4th Crusade and because of the growing strength of the Venetian Republic.

The 13th and 14th centuries are characterized by rapid economic development of the Albanian provinces. More land was brought under cultivation, the production of grain, olives, grapes and livestock products increased. Artisan production trade flourished in the cities. The situation also brought about pronounced class differentiation and increased the political and economic potential of the local feudal chiefs. Thus a powerful stratum of Albanian nobility was created. From 1330 there were a few outstanding feudal families like the Topias, who ruled the region between the Mati and the Shkumbini rivers, the Muzakas, between the Shkumbini and Semani rivers, and the Dukagjini in the north. In the 14th century, following the collapse of Stephan Dushan's Serbian Empire, there began to come into prominence other Albanian feudal families, which having ousted the Serbian rulers, extended their power greatly. But these feudal families which also attacked the commercial cities, came into conflict with one another. This created a grave situation of feudal anarchy from which the strongest gained. Some of these feudal dynasties began to rise to the rank of principalities, like the Topias, Balshas, Muzakas, Shpatas in the south, and others.

Towards the end of the 14th century, a new invasion threatened Albania, that of the Ottoman Turks. During the 80's of the 14th century, the Turkish forces entered the Albanian provinces on two occasions. In 1389 a coalition was formed in the Balkans for defence against the Turks. The decisive battle was fought on the plain of Kosova and was won by the Turks. In the battle they lost their Sultan Murat I. The end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries mark the invasion of the Albanian districts, partly by the Turks and partly by the Venetians. In the course of the conflicts among the big feudal chiefs during the 14th century, at the beginning of the 15th century three new dynasties appeared: the Dukagjinis in the north, the Kastriots in central Albania and the Aranitis in the south. These dynasties were to play an important role in the major political and military events of the 15th century, during the legendary wars for freedom of the Albanian people led by Gjergj

Kastriot, whom the Turks called Skanderbeg. The savage Ottoman rule, during the first part of the 15th century sparked off powerful revolts and uprisings in various districts of Albania. The most powerful of these uprisings was that of the Aranitis, which broke out in 1432. For two years the Albanians of the southern provinces scored brilliant victories which echoed throughout the whole country, as well as in Europe. But these uprisings were only the forerunners of that great 25-year long fight which the Albanians waged under the leadership of Skanderbeg against the furious assault of the Ottoman forces led by two of the most powerful Sultans, Sultan Murat II and Mohamed II — the Victorious.

Gjergj was the youngest son of Gjon Kastriot. He is believed to have been born in 1405. He was still very young when, together with his brothers, he was taken hostage by the Sultan. He was brought up at the Sultan's court and attended a military school there. He stood out for his keenness of mind, his powerful physique and his military talent. He won fame and glory in various battles. But he never forgot his own country and his people. He found the opportunity in November 1443, at the time of the defeat of the Turkish army in the battles against the Hungarian forces, when he and a handful of loyal supporters came to Kruja and seized power. On November 28, 1443, the flag of the Kastriotis, a red flag with a black, double-headed eagle in the middle, which later became the National Flag of Albania, was raised over Kruja castle.

The most urgent problem on the order of the day for Skanderbeg and the country as a whole was to unite the forces and prepare them to face the fury of the Sultans, which would not be long in bursting upon them. This was the purpose of the Council of Lezha, which was opened on March 2, 1444, in the city of Lezha (ancient Lissus). Three months later the Turkish armies were at the gates of Albania. The first battle between the Albanian forces under Skanderbeg and those of the Turks under Ali Pasha took place on the Torvioli Plain, east of the present town of Librazhd. The Turkish forces numbered 25,000 men, while Skanderbeg had about 10,000 fighters. The Albanians scored a brilliant victory. This strengthened the unity of the country and aroused confidence among the people. It had loud repercussions in Europe, too, which was feverishly preparing to

face the Turkish menace. Two further Turkish expeditions were dispatched during 1445 and 1446.

While the forces of the "Albanian League" were busy defending themselves from the Ottomans, the Republic of St. Mark was hatching up intrigues behind their backs. The Venetians were afraid that the strengthening of Skanderbeg's position might endanger their colonies, the commercial cities on the coast. This circumstance led to open war between Venice and Skanderbeg's forces, which continued throughout the years 1447 and 1448.

Meanwhile, a huge Ottoman army of 100,000 led by Sultan Murat II himself, had set out for Albania in the spring of 1448. The situation was becoming very serious for the Albanians, who would soon be between two fires. With lightning speed, Skanderbeg undertook a vigorous operation in the Shkodra region and smashed the Venetian forces on July 23. After a series of fierce battles with the Albanian forces, Sultan Murat failed to achieve any success and returned to his capital to make preparations against the renewed offensive which Hunyadi of Hungary was about to launch against him. The Turks smashed the Hungarian forces in October 1448. The Albanians now remained alone to face the Ottoman hurricane. With a new army of about 100,000 men, Sultan Murat now returned to Albania. Skanderbeg was able to mobilize only about 18,000 fighters. After fierce fighting, in May the Ottoman troops laid seige to Kruja, which was defended by a small garrison of Albanians. Skanderbeg, with most of his forces, remained outside the siege, launching surprise attacks on the invaders from the rear. After trying in vain, all through the summer to take Kruja castle, the Turkish forces were obliged to withdraw after losing one-fifth of their forces in battle.

Simultaneously with his military activities, Skanderbeg had also to develop a very clever diplomacy in order to create alliances with those foreign forces, especially in Italy, who were interested in Skanderbeg's victory. Good relations were created, especially with the kingdom of Naples, a rival of the Republic of St. Mark.

On the other hand, it was also necessary to overcome the resistance of certain local feudal chiefs who feared the growth of Skanderbeg's authority and tried to prevent the establishment of

his centralized power. Some of these feudal chiefs went so far as to betray and place themselves in the service of the enemy. Skanderbeg was able to overcome this threat and managed to form a centralized Albanian state.

The 12 years of continued wars and the complicated internal and external situation had created a very grave situation for Albania. Precisely at this moment, Sultan Mohamed II, who four years before had conquered Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, decided to put an end to the Albanian resistance. Towards the end of spring in 1457, a Turkish army, 80,000 strong, under the command of the famous General Isa Bej Evrenos, set out for Albania. The Turkish army entered Albania, sowing terror and devastation. Skanderbeg had to resort to a very clever tactic. After short battles he left the impression on the enemy that he had been defeated. And precisely when the unsuspecting enemy were celebrating their "victory", he launched a surprise attack on them on the plain of Albulena, completely destroying the invading forces. This brilliant victory had great repercussions, not only from the military, but also from the political point of view. After undertaking a number of other futile expeditions, Sultan Mohamed II proposed an armistice for three years. Skanderbeg accepted this offer with a view to gaining time to consolidate the economy of the country and reorganize his forces. He took the opportunity to go to the aid of his ally, the King of Naples, who was in a critical situation (1461).

But on the urging of Venice, the Sultan broke the terms of the armistice in 1462. Skanderbeg hastened back home and smashed three new Turkish expeditions. In 1463, the Sultan was obliged to seek a 10-year peace agreement with Skanderbeg. Skanderbeg accepted it. However, the peace did not last long. At the end of 1463 the fighting began again. The years 1464 to 1465 were years of fierce battles. The Ottoman expeditions failed, one after the other. In June 1466, on the eve of the harvest, Sultan Mohamed II himself came to Albania at the head of an army of 150,000 men. Kruja was besieged again. The situation became very critical. Skanderbeg sought aid in weapons and provisions from Venice, Naples and Rome. He, himself, went to Italy. They paid him great homage, but gave him no aid. Nevertheless, after fierce battles under the walls of Kruja, the Albanians forced the Turks

to abandon the field of battle in April 1467. But in July Sultan Mohamed II with all his army appeared in Albania again, and after bloody battles, once more succeeded in laying seige to Kruja. He suffered very heavy losses, and three weeks later lifted the siege and departed from Albania.

In spite of the victories scored in the field of battle, the situation in Albania had become very alarming. There were shortages of arms, foodstuffs and men. Skanderbeg strove to renew the "Albanian League" of the year 1444. He called the Albanian princes together in Lezha in January 1468, but just at this time he fell gravely ill and died in Lezha on January 17, 1468. For Albania, Skanderbeg's death was a very great loss. For a quarter of a century, Albania had managed to withstand the waves of the Ottoman invasion. However, even after Skanderbeg's death, for a few more decades it managed to continue the armed struggle. Sultan Mohamed II had to come back again to Albania in person in 1478. Kruja fell in July of that year. The Sultan turned on Shkodra, which resisted until January 1479. Partial, but fierce uprisings continued up to 1505.

The 25-years war of the Albanians under Skanderbeg became a source of inspiration for the coming generations through the centuries. The leader of these battles, Skanderbeg, became the symbol of the resistance of the Albanian people. Writers and artists of various genres have produced hundreds of artistic works about him, and are still doing so to this day.

During these periods, tens of thousands of Albanians with their families were driven abroad to foreign lands, mainly to southern Italy. To this day they preserve Albanian ethnic features.

The invaders established their savage military rule in Albania, although some regions, like Himara, Dukagjini, the Shkodra highlands, Dibra, etc., did not submit to Ottoman law. During the 16th and 17th centuries, these regions became centres of resistance against the invaders. In June 1594, basing their hopes on the coalition of the European countries against Turkey, the chiefs of the Albanian highlands assembled in the Mati region and sought supplies of weapons from the coalition. But no aid was given. Again in 1601 a similar convention was organized, which sent a delegation to Europe, but it was unable to secure any aid. The invaders organized a number of operations during

the years 1610, 1612 and 1615.

The 17th century saw the positions of the military authorities in the outlying districts of the Empire become greatly weakened, while those of the local chiefs became stronger and stronger. The cities, too, marked good progress, especially in the extension of artisan production and trade. Shkodra, Prizren, Berat, Gjirokastra, Elbasan and Voskopoja are mentioned at this period; some elementary schools also began to be opened. But the development of education was hampered by religion, which split the people into three groups: moslems, orthodox and catholics, and the school teachers were trained either in the Islamic oriental culture, or in Greek or Latin culture. In the city of Voskopoja there was even a secondary school called the "New Academy". In 1720 a printery which published books was opened in that city.

Although the 17th and 18th centuries marked some degree of economic and cultural progress in the country, the development of national culture was impeded in every way by the foreign rulers and religious obscurantism. According to documents discovered, the Albanian language began to be written from the 16th century. In 1555 Gjon Buzuku published a religious book, which is considered the first book written in Albanian. Other patriots, like Pjetër Budi (1566-1622), Frang Bardhi (1606-1645), Pjetër Bogdani (1625-1684) also wrote in Albanian. Many other Albanians displayed their talents in painting, architecture and other fields. The people preserved in their bosom a priceless treasury of folklore, which became their spiritual nourishment for centuries on end, and protected them from assimilation by foreigners.

From the end of the 18th century, the central power of the Turkish Empire had become weaker. Separatist trends had gained strength among the big feudal chiefs who had greatly enriched and strengthened themselves during conflicts with their weaker neighbours. In the Albanian regions two great feudal duchies had emerged: that of the Bushatlis of Shkodra in the north and that of Ali Pasha Tepelena in the south. A series of very prominent figures headed the Shkodra duchy, but the most famous of them was Kara Mahmud Pasha Bushatlli, who ruled from 1775 to 1796. Having conquered his feudal rivals, he began to openly oppose the authority of the Sublime Porte. The Sultan

sent repeated expeditions to subjugate the Shkodra duchy but failed to achieve his end. The Turkish armies were defeated time and again. Kara Mahmud Pasha extended his domain from Montenegro to central Albania and Kosova. Within his duchy the economy began to develop and trade and social life flourished. The same phenomenon as in northern Albania also took place in southern Albania. By means of guile and his daring actions, Ali Tepelena, the son of a minor feudal chieftain, left fatherless when still a child, exploited situations and managed to win such favour with the Sultan that he was entrusted with important posts. But when he felt strong enough, he turned his back on the Sultan. He began to act entirely independently, not only in internal affairs, but also in foreign policy. His duchy with Yannina as its centre, extended from Vlora and Berat to Çamëria and Thessaly. Yannina became a centre with a lively international diplomatic movement, while the Pasha became a romantic figure. Thus in 1812, the whole territory of Albania was included in the two above mentioned duchies.

Having overcome the difficulties of the wars, which burst out against it from the beginning of the 19th century, the Sublime Porte took energetic measures against the Bushatllis and Ali Pasha Tepelena. In 1820, the Turks laid siege to Yannina. After a long resistance, which continued for nearly two years, the Turks managed to kill Ali Pasha in January 1822, thus putting an end to the duchy of Yannina. After this, the Sultan turned his attention to the Bushatllis, and in 1831 re-established the central authority in the duchy of Shkodra, too.

In order to strengthen its central authority, the Sublime Porte proclaimed the reforms known as the "Tanzimat". Among the Albanians these reforms aroused all-round opposition. In the 40's of the 19th century, whole regions rose in arms, both in the south and in the north. But the objectives of these uprisings were limited. They were directed only against the reforms, against taxes and military service. In the most progressive Albanian circles inside the country and abroad, it became clear that these limited movements had no powerful political backing nor any clear perspectives. It was necessary to strive to give the movement a national basis according to the most advanced ideas of the time in Europe, a national basis and an objective of separation from Turkey. Thus began the first efforts for the

Albanian national movement with its earliest representatives, Naum Veqilharxhi (1797-1859) and later, Jeronim de Rada, who crystalized in their writings the idea of the Albanian national movement and the necessity of spreading education in the Albanian language. Veqilharxhi even worked out a special alphabet for this purpose.

But the Albanian national movement underwent rapid development especially during the second half of the 19th century. The struggle of the Albanians against the Turkish reforms was followed with interest both in the Balkans, as well as by the European powers. The latter, both before and after the Russo-Turkish Crimean War, were for keeping Turkey as a counterbalance to the Russian intentions in southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean. However no one thought about the demand of the Albanians, and neither the Big Powers nor the neighbouring countries supported the struggle of the Albanians for the creation of an Albania detached from Turkey. Indeed the intention of the ruling circles of the neighbouring countries was to partition Albania among themselves. In 1861, secret negotiations were held between Serbia and Greece aiming at dividing the Albanian territory between them as soon as the Turks withdrew.

But among the Albanians, national consciousness had been awakened. The best representatives of the country fully understood the danger threatening the nation and thus began that great movement, which is known in the history of Albania as the "Albanian National Renaissance". The ultimate objective of this movement was to ensure the independence of Albania, to set up an Albanian state which would develop as the other states in Europe. The movement developed in three main directions: in struggle to preserve the territorial integrity of Albania against the chauvinist aims of the neighbouring states and the deals between the Big Powers; second, in struggle for separation from Turkey, and, third, towards the national awakening, the spread of education and culture in the Albanian language and on the basis of ancient Albanian traditions. Of special importance at this stage of history was the "League of Prizren", an Albanian patriotic organization, which arose as an historical necessity to direct and

organize the movement. This organization emerged on the initiative of a secret committee formed in Constantinople in 1878, and made up of outstanding patriots like Abdyl Frashëri, Pashko Vasa, Sami Frashëri, Jani Vreto and others. This was the time when, after the Balkan crisis of the years 1875 and 1876, Turkey was obliged to recognize the establishment of autonomous provinces in the Balkans. Later, after Russia went to war with Turkey in 1877, the vanquished Turks were compelled to revise the clauses of the St. Stephano Treaty on March 3, 1878. In this treaty Albania was not even mentioned. Indeed, many Albanian provinces were annexed to Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria. This aroused a wave of irrepressible indignation in the Albanian provinces. In order to revise the clauses of the St. Stephano Treaty, the European Great Powers decided to call the Congress of Berlin in June 1878. The Albanian Committee in Istanbul saw the urgency of summoning an Albanian assembly as widely representative as possible in order to raise before the world the rights of the Albanian nation. This convention met in the city of Prizren (now in Yugoslavia), only three days prior to the opening of the Berlin Congress. The convention created the "League of Prizren" with branches in all the provinces of Albania. It immediately dispatched a memorandum to the Congress of Berlin. But the Albanian claims were not taken into account. Then it became necessary to fight, arms in hand, to defend every inch of Albanian territory. Worthy of mention were the battles fought in defence of the northern provinces of Plava and Gucija, Hot, Gruda, Ulqini, etc. On the other front of the struggle for the autonomy of Albania, the patriots encountered innumerable difficulties and the rabid opposition of the Sublime Porte. This struggle, like that to prevent the dismemberment of Albania, was combined with the struggle to spread education, knowledge and the national consciousness. Such distinguished personalities as the great poet Naim Frashëri (1846-1900), Sami Frashëri (1850-1904), Andon Zako Çajupi (1856-1930) became the ideologists and fiery promoters of patriotic sentiments, standard bearers of the unity of the Albanian nation without distinction as to religion or social standing. For three decades, this fierce struggle continued in the three directions mentioned. The movement gained momentum. The fight for territorial

integrity was waged in all fields with arms and in the political and diplomatic fields. Books in the Albanian language were published abroad in Rumania, Bulgaria, Egypt, Italy and elsewhere; newspapers and magazines dealing with Albanian problems began to be published and distributed illegally. The first Albanian school was opened at Korça on March 7, 1887. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Albanian question was batted back and forth through the diplomatic chancellories of the Great Powers. In April 1900, the Albanian patriot, Ismail Qemal, who up to that time had carried out important functions in the Ottoman administration and was known throughout the Empire as a progressive politician and an outstanding diplomat, left Turkey in a demonstrative manner. In exile he carried out all-round activity to invigorate and direct the national movement. During the early years of the 19th century, the Balkans were seething with passions and conflicts among states wanting to grab territories from one another. The Albanian provinces in particular became the prey of chauvinistic activities of neighbours, who devastated whole regions by activities of banditry and killed Albanian patriots. Faced with such a situation, the Albanian national movement had to step up its armed actions both against the forces of occupation as well as against the chauvinist bands of the neighbours. New patriotic figures began to appear. A group of young patriots with revolutionary tendencies formed a secret committee in Manastir (Bitolje) in November 1905, and created branches throughout Albania. This committee, together with its regional sub-committees, in collaboration with the patriotic associations abroad, carried out a great deal of propaganda work for the mobilization of the people to undertake military activities for the independence of the country. The President of the Manastir Committee, Bajo Topulli, a former director of the Turkish secondary school in Manastir, personally took the initiative to form a fighting unit (*çeta*), an initiative which was quickly followed by the other committees in the country. Fighting actions began to be carried out everywhere. The movement of the "Young Turks" and the proclamation of the "Constitution" by Sultan Abdyl Hamid, created some illusions among certain Albanian patriotic circles. But this situation did not last long. The disillusionment caused very strong indignation and revolt

throughout the country. It was clearly seen that the Albanians could solve their problems only by relying on their own armed struggle.

At the same time, the legal means were utilized to extend the patriotic movement, to open clubs, Albanian schools, and the alphabet which is used today was laid down definitively. The first Albanian secondary school was opened in Elbasan in December 1909.

Through their acts of oppression and exploitation, the Young Turks sparked off the outbreak of a powerful uprising, which started first in the district of Prishtina in the spring of 1910, and later in that of Peja, and spread all over the province of Kosova. The Turks dispatched a special army corps under the command of Shefqet Turgut Pasha, a general of the Prussian school against the rebels. A bloody battle took place at the end of April 1910, at the Kaçaniku Pass. After heroic resistance, the Albanian insurgents commanded by Idriz Seferi were forced to withdraw, but the movement was so widespread that the Turkish Minister of War came himself, leading fresh troops, to reinforce Turgut Pasha's contingent. Having overrun Kosova, the Turks then turned to the districts of Shkodra and central Albania, spreading destruction and terror. Faced with this situation, the Albanian patriots saw the vital need to unite all their forces in a single armed national movement and to launch an offensive without waiting for the opponents to attack. On April 6, 1911, Ded Gjo Luli, the leader of the uprising in the Shkodra Highlands, was forced by King Nicola of Montenegro, who had given the Highlanders refuge, to start the uprising prematurely. This confused the plans of the general uprising. The insurgents of the Shkodra Highlands fought heroically against the Turkish divisions. The Turkish government was unable to carry its military operation right through to the end. The Albanian patriots, headed by Ismail Qemal and a new figure, which was making a name in the movement, Luigj Gurakuqi (1879-1925), gathered at Gërçë in Montenegro on June 23, 1911, sent a memorandum to the Turkish government demanding the territorial and administrative autonomy of Albania. Such Albanian patriots continued the political struggle for the autonomy of Albania also within the Turkish parliament. But in 1912, the situation in the Balkans had again become acute.

Taking advantage of the difficulties of Turkey, which was in conflict with Italy over Tripoli, the Balkan kings thought that the time was ripe to satisfy their greed by annexing the Albanian territories. New uprisings broke out. In April 1912, that of the Gjakova Highlands began and spread to the whole of Kosova, then to southern Albania, to central Albania and to the north. The insurgents in Kosova led by Hasan Prishtina, Bajram Curri, and others marched on Shkup, in Macedonia, which they captured on August 12, 1912. Likewise other forces liberated the towns of Fier, Përmet, etc.

In October 1912, the Balkan states declared war on Turkey with the aim of dividing among them the territories which Turkey still held in the Balkans. They turned their greedy eyes especially towards the Albanian territories. The situation became very critical for the Albanians. Towards the end of October, in pursuit of the Turkish army, the armies of the Balkan states entered the Albanian territories. It was precisely at this time that Ismail Qemal left Turkey and visited a number of countries in Europe. He was well aware that it was necessary to act quickly and with determination no longer for the autonomy of Albania, but for the complete detachment of Albania from Turkey and for independence. He took this initiative on his own, and at the same time when the Greek, Serbian and Montenegrin armies had occupied almost the whole of Albania, he came to Albania and with a group of patriots hoisted the national flag in Vlora on November 28, 1912. Albania was proclaimed an independent state. After nearly five centuries of bondage, the Albanian people had succeeded in setting up their first government, headed by Ismail Qemal.

Right from the start, the new Albanian state had to face many difficulties. The intrigues of foreign powers and its internal differences gave the country no time to consolidate its victory. During the year 1913, after many negotiations, the imperialist Great Powers defined, at the London Conference of Ambassadors, the boundaries of the Albanian state. These boundaries included no more than half the Albanian territory, nearly 28,000 square kilometres, with a population of about 800,000.

Under the pretext of calming the situation in Albania, the Great Powers decided on July 29, 1913 to send a German prince,

Wilhelm Wied, to rule in Albania. Ismail Qemal was forced to resign from the Vlora government. But the foreign prince did nothing to put the life of the country in order, to liberate the territories which had been left outside the borders and unite them with the Albanian state. He set up a government with feudal elements. Because of a big uprising of the peasantry, on September 3, 1914, the prince had to leave Albania. During World War I, the situation was further complicated. Albania was occupied by the belligerent powers. On April 26, 1915, the four powers of the Entente signed the secret Treaty of London, which divided Albania among Italy, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro.

When the World War was over, the three signatory powers of the secret Treaty of London, Britain, France and Italy, as well as the USA agreed that the clauses of the Treaty about the partition of Albania should be implemented. Russia, where the power of the Soviets had now been established, opposed the Treaty. Indeed Lenin exposed this Treaty world-wide by publishing it in the press.

This critical situation impelled the Albanian patriotic circles to take measures and act quickly in order to save the fatherland. A patriotic government had to be set up to take the fate of the country into its own hands. But under the conditions in which the Italian army held the whole of Albania under occupation (with the exception of Korça and Shkodra where there were French troops), the setting up of such a government was very difficult.

At the Peace Conference, which was held at Versailles on January 18, 1919, an Albanian delegation took part. The Conference failed to solve the Albanian problem, and afterwards the situation remained very tense. At the beginning of 1920, the Albanian patriots organized a National Congress which was to take measures to save the nation. The Congress was opened in the town of Lushnja on January 28, 1920, and took decisions of historic importance. The Congress also formed a new government and a delegation to the Peace Conference. After it was shifted from Lushnja to Tirana, the new government began to exercise its functions. Among other things, it demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces from Albania. Italy concentrated these forces in the zone of Vlora with a view to annexing it. It was clearly seen that the Italian troops could be driven out of Vlora only by force of arms. For this purpose a "Committee of

"National Defence" was secretly set up inside the city. This committee, in secret agreement with the Tirana government, issued the call for an armed uprising against the Italian imperialists. Thousands of armed volunteers from all over Albania gathered around the zone occupied by the Italians. On June 3, the Committee sent the Italian command an ultimatum, which it refused to accept. The assault for the liberation of Vlora began on June 5. From the very first days, the Albanian patriots scored major successes against two Italian divisions well protected in strongly fortified positions. The war of Vlora raged fiercely for weeks on end. The Albanian patriots displayed rare heroism and reached the outskirts of the city. Italy was compelled, at last, to sign an agreement with the Tirana government and to withdraw its troops from Vlora. However it kept the island of Sazan at the entrance to the Bay of Vlora.

Meanwhile, the armed forces of the Tirana government under the command of the patriot Bajram Curri, had launched a large-scale operation against the rebellion of Esad Pasha Toptani's forces. Esad Pasha was forced to flee the country, only to concoct new intrigues abroad, but he was shot dead in Paris on June 13, 1920, by Avni Rustem (1895-1924), a young patriot, who was emerging as an outstanding figure in the democratic and revolutionary movement.

The victory in the war of Vlora consolidated the international position of Albania. Now the Tirana government and the patriotic forces turned their attention towards strengthening the internal situation. The problems to be solved were very complicated since neither Yugoslavia nor Greece had given up their intrigues and their old aims. In the struggle to take over the government of the country two distinct political groups emerged: the **Progressive Party**, which represented the interests of the big landowners, the conservative bourgeoisie and the top clergy, and the **Popular Party**, which was based on the broad masses of the people. The political struggle between these two main trends became more and more acute. These two trends also produced their most conspicuous representatives. Among the democratic forces Luigj Gurakuqi, Bajram Curri, the young patriot Avni Rustemi, Fan S. Noli and others, played a special role. From the reactionary side, a young feudal chieftain, Ahmet Bey Zogolli, or Ahmet Zogu, as he preferred to call himself, began to emerge as a

prominent figure. Ambitious and an intriguer, he managed to occupy important posts in the Tirana government and gradually to take the power into his own hands. Faced with such a situation, the democratic forces of the Popular Party, led by Fan S. Noli, Luigj Gurakuqi and others, formed a new opposition front in parliament. In October a political organization, *Bashkimi*, headed by Avni Rustemi, was formed outside parliament.

Through intrigues and Bonapartist actions, Zog concentrated all power in his own hands. The forces of the opposition understood clearly that the country could be saved from the feudal dictatorship of Zog only through energetic action. On April 20, 1924, Zog's agents made an attempt on the life of the patriot, Avni Rustemi, who died two days later from the wounds he received. Public outrage against the assassination of Avni Rustemi led to an uprising against the Zogite clique. On June 10th the democratic forces entered Tirana. Ahmed Zog and his clique of beys fled abroad. On June 16th the democratic government headed by Fan Noli was formed. The programme of the Fan Noli government contained the main principles of a bourgeois-democratic state. On the other hand, Ahmed Zog was making preparations in Yugoslavia for revenge and the government failed to take the necessary steps to forestall the danger. In December 1924, with the direct assistance of the Yugoslav ruling circles, Ahmed Zog returned to Albania, overthrew the Noli government and made himself President of the Republic. Thus began the period of Zogite clique's savage rule. Zog pursued the policy of ruthless suppression of every democratic movement. On March 2, 1925, his agents killed Luigj Gurakuqi in Bari of Italy. On March 29, 1925, they besieged and killed Bajram Curri in the Tropoja district. Zog threw open the door to the foreign imperialists to come and exploit the resources of the country and the Albanian people. He rewarded Yugoslavia by giving it part of the territory of Albania. On November 27, 1926, Zog signed a "Pact of Friendship and Security" with Italy, while one year later, on November 22, 1927, he signed the **Second Tirana Pact**, called the "Treaty of the Defence Alliance" for a twenty-year period. Thus, from that time, Italy took over the economy and the equipment, and the instruction of the army. Vlora remained an open port for the Italian navy. In internal

affairs the Zog regime increased the oppression and exploitation of the broad working masses of town and countryside even further. The heavy taxes had the same form as those left by the regime of Ottoman occupation. Culture and education remained in a backward state. The regime gave the imperialist powers a free hand to exert their influence through the schools and education.

The rapprochement with Italy and the many economic and political concessions which Ahmed Zog, as President of the Albanian Republic, made to Mussolini, enabled him to realize one of his cherished ambitions. On September 1st, 1928, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed Albania a Kingdom and Ahmed Zog "King of the Albanians". By demagogic, Zog I (this was what the king was now called) tried to quell the indignation of the masses. He loudly proclaimed a number of reforms, and drafted some laws on the pattern of the laws of the Western bourgeois states. But almost none of them were implemented. The agrarian reform about which there was so much boasting affected only about eight thousand hectares of state or private land nearly all swamp. On the problem of foreign concessions, too, the reign of Zog did nothing but concentrate these concessions in the hands of Italian capital.

Despite the savage Zogist reaction, the democratic and revolutionary movement was not wiped out. The oppressed masses expressed their protest against the exploitation by foreign capital and against the regime in various ways. In 1928, some progressive elements formed the first communist cell in Korça. Communist ideas had long begun to spread in Albania, but from that time onward, the revolutionary forces within the country began to organize. In June 1929, the representatives of the Korça communist cells held a meeting and set up a committee. This marked the creation of the first communist group in Albania, which was followed by other groups later. Under the influence of these groups, associations of workers and artisans were created. The communist, Ali Kelmendi, played an important role in the ideological and organizational orientation of the Korça group and the other communist groups. While abroad, he had been in contact with the Comintern and he returned to Albania where he helped in the formation of the communist movement.

Anti-Zogist elements attempted a number of times to

overthrow the Zogist regime. But these attempts were more of the nature of plots and failed. In Albania the world economic crisis lasted longer than in other countries. In an artificial way, fascist Italy, which had the keys to the economy in its hands, created such conditions as to compel Albania to grant further concessions. At first Zog tried to resist with the aim of preserving something for himself, but finally he was obliged to submit to Mussolini's political, military and economic pressure. From this period, 1934 to 1935, Zog put Albania in complete subservience to Italy.

In August 1935, anti-Zogist elements again tried unsuccessfully to overthrow the regime. The uprising, which is known as the "Fieri Uprising" insufficiently organized and including wavering elements, was crushed right at the start. In order to calm the situation, in October 1935, Zog appointed a new "liberal" government. But the liberalism of this government was entirely formal, because when the workers of the Kuçova oil fields called a strike in order to demand their rights from the Italian proprietors, the government took sides with the latter and put down the workers' movement with violence. The situation which was created imparted a fresh impulse to the clandestine development of the communist movement, the only revolutionary movement with a perspective to save the country both from the Zogite oppression and from the menace of fascist occupation. The communist elements abroad, like Ali Kelmendi and others, helped in spreading communist ideas and in organizing the movement. Many communists and revolutionary elements went to the aid of the Spanish people fighting to defend the Republic from the intervention of the fascists and nazis.

Zog sensed the danger of the communist movement in Albania. On the eve of the occupation of Albania by fascist Italy, the organs of his dictatorship launched a savage campaign against the communist movement; many arrests were made and a large number of revolutionary elements were imprisoned or interned.

The economic and political agreements concluded between Rome and Tirana in March 1936 paved the way for the Italian military occupation of Albania. Mussolini now awaited only the opportune moment to act. Having received Hitler's support for his aggressive plans, and having ensured the silent approval of

the Western powers, at the beginning of 1939 he began to carry out his plans. Through the agents of his **fifth column** in Albania, Mussolini had taken measures to sabotage the resistance of the Albanian people. At dawn on April 7, 1939, the fascist troops began to land on the Albanian shores. The Albanian army had been left without ammunition, the few pieces of artillery had been sabotaged by the fascist instructors. Nevertheless, in Durrës, Vlora, Saranda, Shëngjin and everywhere, the invading Italian troops encountered the armed resistance of the Albanian patriots. Groups of soldiers and volunteers who managed to secure some ammunition made the enemy bleed. The Italian fleet bombarded Durrës and the other ports. The Italian airforce carried out incursions over the cities of Albania. King Zog I with his royal family and his clique abandoned the country and fled abroad.

With demagogic and terror, Italian fascism tried to suppress any expression of patriotic feeling or resistance among the people. It tried to create the illusion that under Mussolini's Empire, Albania would develop and flourish. But in fact this demagogic was very soon shown up in its true colours. The Albanian people were well aware that fascist Italy had occupied the country. It was preparing for new adventures against the other Balkan countries. The hatred of the people for the fascist invaders, which was expressed in those April days with demonstrations and bullets, mounted ceaselessly. The most consistent communists placed themselves in the forefront of the political struggle and the fighting with arms. Outstanding among them was the thirty-year-old communist, Enver Hoxha (born in the city of Gjirokastra on October 16, 1908), who led the efforts to form the Albanian Communist Party, and to organize the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War. Units (*çeta*) of fighters were set up, which carried out actions against the fascist troops, like that of Peza, which during the years 1940-41, inflicted losses on the invaders. In May that year, Victor Emmanuel III, Emperor of Italy, came on a visit to Albania. In the centre of Tirana the worker Vasil Laçi fired shots at him.

The efforts of the most resolute communists, headed by Enver Hoxha, overcoming many difficulties, succeeded in creating the conditions for the merger of the communist groups, which were acting separately. On November 8, 1941, the representatives of

the groups gathered in Tirana in the greatest secrecy and formed the Communist Party of Albania. The Party took upon itself the great historic task of organizing and leading the general armed uprising against fascism for the liberation of the country and the establishment of the people's state power. The meeting elected the Provisional Central Committee. Enver Hoxha was charged with the leadership of the Central Committee. Two weeks after the founding of the Communist Party, on November 23, 1941, and also in Tirana, the organization of the Communist Youth of Albania was formed, with the young man, Qemal Stafa, member of the CC of the Communist Party of Albania as its political secretary.

The formation of the Communist Party of Albania was accompanied with militant activities. In the cities powerful anti-fascist demonstrations broke out, which ended in bloody conflicts. The communist worker Koçi Bako was killed in the demonstration on November 8, 1941. With their exemplary bravery and courage, the communists won the sympathy of the broad masses of workers and the revolutionary patriotic youth.

The fascist ruling circles in Albania understood the new situation which was being created and immediately began to take energetic measures. The quisling government of the big feudal lord Shefqet Vërlaci, which had shown itself incapable of strangling the Albanian resistance at birth, was replaced by the government of Mustafa Kruja, an old agent of fascism, notorious for his barbarity towards the freedom fighters and the people. The ruthless measures taken by the new fascist government further aggravated the situation in the country. The Communist Party extended its armed struggle in the cities through guerrilla units, partisan and volunteer detachments were set up and the acts of sabotage and diversion became more widespread. On May 5, 1942, Qemal Stafa, Political Secretary of the Communist Youth Organization, was killed in battle with the fascists in Tirana. The Party was shedding the blood of its finest sons and daughters for the cause of freedom. One and a half months later, three communists, Perlat Rexhepi, Branko Kadia and Jordan Misja, besieged in a house in Shkodra, fought the fascist troops with unprecedented heroism for hours on end.

Armed actions were carried out everywhere. On the instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

of Albania, the guerrilla units, the partisan detachments and the volunteers from the people destroyed the telegraph and telephone line network throughout all Albania on the night of July 24-25, 1942. This greatly alarmed the fascists. On August 25, 1942, the first number of *Zëri i Popullit*, organ of the Albanian Communist Party, was published illegally. In September 1942, the Albanian National Liberation Conference was held at Peza, a village 18 km. southwest of Tirana. The Conference of Peza, which was organized on the initiative of the Albanian Communist Party, laid the basis for the union of the Albanian people in a single national liberation front. The programme adopted at the Conference of Peza laid down the task of waging uncompromising war against fascism and the traitors for a free, independent and democratic Albania. It also laid down the task of forming national liberation councils everywhere as organs of the union and mobilization of the people in the war and as organs of the people's state power.

The conference of Peza had wide repercussions. All over the country the anti-fascist movement and the war assumed a fresh impulse. From day to day the partisan units were increased and the armed struggle extended. By the end of 1942, the number of partisans reached 2,000 fighters, besides several thousand others who took part in the guerrilla units of the cities and the village detachments. Whole districts like Peza, Kurvelesh, Skrapar and others had been liberated.

In order to destroy the partisan forces, from September to December 1942, the occupiers, using big forces carried out punitive operations in 27 districts of Albania, burning whole villages and massacring the population.

The foreign occupationists and the local reactionaries accompanied these military operations with political activities especially by setting up collaborationist organizations like that called "Balli Kombëtar". The Communist Party acted with great maturity towards this organization, which at first included elements misled by enemy propaganda, exposing the real aims of this organization and enlightening those who had been deceived. Later the "Balli Kombëtar" was obliged to come out in its true colours and was abandoned by the rank-and-file people who had been misled by the pseudo-nationalist demagogic of its leaders.

The successes which the National Liberation Movement

scored in 1942, made it possible, in the spring of 1943, to place on the agenda the organization of the general armed uprising against the invaders. This task was concretized at the First National Conference of the Albanian Communist Party which was held at Labinot in the Elbasan district from March 17 to 22, 1943.

Meanwhile, under the new conditions of the situation, the fascist circles tried, at the beginning of 1943, to take certain new political measures in order to stop things developing to their disadvantage. The government of Mustafa Kruja was replaced by several other governments one after the other. Rome promised to make some changes in its economic policy towards Albania; Francesco Iacomoni, who had been at the head of the Italian Diplomacy in Albania before the occupation, was removed from his post as Viceroy; the Albanian Fascist Party was replaced by a similar organization under a new label.

The good work done by the National Liberation Front under the guidance of the Albanian Communist Party brought about a big increase in the number of partisan units and battalions during spring in 1943. Now the actions carried out were no longer isolated ones against fascist troops where they were stationed or in transit, but actions skilfully coordinated by the CC of the Albanian Communist Party and the Regional Party Committees. Such were a number of operations carried out from the end of June to the end of July 1943. While the General Staff of the National Liberation Army with the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party, Enver Hoxha as its Commissar, was set up at Labinot (near Elbasan) a number of operations against the fascist troops were taking place at Krraba Pass (on the Tirana-Elbasan highway) at Pojskë of Pogradec, at Leskovik, at Kuqar of Permet, up to Mezgoran and Kiçoku Pass near the town of Telelena. At the same time, the Italian fascists carried out operations against the population in the districts of Peza, Mallakastra, etc. The creation of the General Staff made it possible to concentrate the military, strategic and operational leadership of the National Liberation Army in one supreme organ. At the time when the General Staff was set up, the National Liberation Army included in its ranks 10,000 fighters organized in regular partisan units.

A few days prior to the formation of the General Staff, the

partisan units launched their first attack on German troops, on a motorized column which came from Macedonia and entered Albanian territory on its way to Yanina (Greece). The attack was launched on July 6, 1943 at the village of Barmash in the Kolonja district. Taken by surprise, the nazis suffered heavy losses in men and military equipment. In reprisal they burned the entire village of Borova and killed all the inhabitants they managed to capture (107 men, women and children). The setting up of the General Staff, the rapid increase of partisan formation, battalions, and groups, the preparations for the formation of the First Shock Brigade, which was formed on August 15, 1943, all greatly alarmed the Italian command in Albania. It decided to take new measures in order to destroy the National Liberation Army. Four divisions, reinforced by artillery troops and supported by aircraft, began a new operation in the Mallakastra zone and later in other zones. The local situation was complicated also because at this time the allied troops landed in Sicily. The "Balli Kombëtar", which now saw that fascist Italy was on the eve of total defeat in expectation of an allied landing on the Albanian coast, hastened to launch open attacks against the partisan forces in collaboration with the Italian army.

Italy's capitulation on September 8, 1943 created an entirely new situation in the country. On instructions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Albania and the General Staff of the National Liberation Army, the partisan units called on the Italian troops to stop their military operations and join the partisans in order to fight the German nazis who were hurriedly taking the place of the Italians. The Italian command refused, and most of the Italian troops surrendered to the Germans. A number of armymen were dispersed and found shelter among Albanian peasant families, who displayed a fine spirit of magnanimity to the defeated enemy. The people shared their meagre food with these former soldiers. A small number of Italians joined the Albanian partisans and later formed a partisan detachment of their own, which took the name of "Antonio Gramsci".

The nazi troops, who came to Albania, encountered armed resistance from the forces of the National Liberation Army everywhere. The heaviest fighting took place in the vicinity of Vlora and extended over more than twenty days. Under

conditions of the relentless war with the partisan forces, the nazis tried to stabilize the situation in Albania. They very quickly came to terms with the "Balli Kombëtar" and all the reactionaries. In the early months of the occupation, they tried demagogic to create the impression that they supported the initiative of the "nationalists" (implying the collaborationists) for the creation of an "independent" Albanian state. At the same time, another organization was set up, instigated in particular by the Anglo-Americans, which had the aim of rallying the former sympathizers of King Zog. This organization is known as "Legality". By mid-October 1943, the partisan units had liberated whole districts, and even a certain number of towns, while Tirana itself was surrounded by the partisan forces. On October 18, on the eve of the opening of the so-called "Constituent Assembly", under the protection of German bayonets, the partisan artillery of the 3rd Shock Brigade shelled the Palace where the meeting of the traitors was to be held.

It was clear to the Germans that the partisan forces were so strong that, in order to cope with them, it was necessary to engage in major military operations themselves. For this purpose parallel with demagogic measures, the German command quickly prepared a large scale military operation which is known in the history of the National Liberation War as "The Winter Campaign of 1943-44". In this campaign, which started in October 1943 and ended in February 1944, four Hitlerite divisions were engaged as well as a large number of collaborationist troops from the Quisling government, "Balli Kombëtar", "Legality", etc. These troops numbered 45,000 men against 10,000 partisans included in the units of the National Liberation Army. The enemy tried to liquidate the partisan units, to destroy their bases in the countryside, to liquidate the leadership of the National Liberation Movement, the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party and the General Staff. The partisans and the people as a whole demonstrated unprecedented heroism at this stage of the war. The march of part of the First Brigade in February and March 1944, which penetrated deep to the rear of the enemy from southern Albania to regions of central Albania, has become a legend.

The "Winter Campaign" was a total failure for the Germans and their collaborators. Although it had to pass through very

difficult situations, although it lost about 1,000 partisans killed, or dead from the difficult conditions of the winter, the National Liberation Army emerged stronger than ever. Instead of the three brigades which it had in autumn 1943, it now had seven brigades of partisans in action. The National Liberation Army launched a counter-offensive, and in a very short time liberated all the districts which the enemy had moved into during the operation.

The victories scored by the National Liberation Army in spring 1944, enabled the Albanian Communist Party to take new political initiatives of decisive importance for the future of the country. In the conditions when the Red Army under J.V. Stalin was striking crushing blows at Hitler's army in the East and when the allied armies were fighting in Italy, major problems arose for our country. The reactionaries, in contact with the reactionaries abroad, tried to manoeuvre so that they, with the aid of the Anglo-Americans, would take power into their hands once the Germans had been defeated. In these conditions, preparations were made for calling "The First Anti-Fascist National Liberation Congress" which met in the liberated town of Përmet on May 24, 1944. The Congress took decisions of extreme importance for the future of Albania. It solved the problem of political power in favour of the insurgent people, and founded the first Albanian state of People's Democracy. The decisions of the Congress formed the basis of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania.

Before the proceedings of the Congress ended, the National Liberation Army had received orders to launch the general offensive for the complete liberation of Albania. The First Division of the National Liberation Army was created and set out for action in central and northern Albania in order to strengthen the movement even in those regions where the reactionaries had dug themselves in. In this undertaking the command of the National Liberation Army encountered the opposition of the Anglo-American Mediterranean Command, which aimed at preserving the positions of the reactionaries in Albania. But those plans came to naught. After successfully coping with a new enemy operation (the German operation of June 1944) involving 50,000 enemy troops (four-and-a-half German divisions and some thousands of collaborationists), the

National Liberation Army liberated the districts of central Albania, Dibra, Mirdita and the north. Autumn 1944 also saw the liberation, one after another, of the cities of Albania.

On October 22, 1944, at its second meeting, held in the liberated city of Berat, the AFNLC decided to change the Anti-Fascist Committee into the Democratic Government of Albania.

The forces of the National Liberation Army fought an heroic battle lasting 19 days against some thousands of Hitlerite troops for the liberation of the capital, Tirana. Tirana was liberated on November 17, 1944. The Democratic Government entered Tirana on November 28, 1944. The next day, the partisan brigades also liberated Shkodra, the last city held by the Germans. That day marked the complete liberation of Albania.

On orders from the Commander-in-Chief of the National Liberation Army, Enver Hoxha, and in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, two Divisions of the National Liberation Army crossed the borders of Albania to Yugoslavia, where they took part in the fighting for the liberation of Macedonia, Kosova and Montenegro up to southern Bosnia. Thus, even outside Albania, hundreds of sons and daughters of our people gave their life's blood for the great cause of the peoples, the victory over fascism.

In this way, the Albanian people, led by the Communist Party of Albania, scored the most brilliant victory in their history. They took political power into their own hands, opening the way for the triumph of the revolution and socialist construction in Albania.

Although Albania then had a population of only one million, it made a valuable contribution to the cause to defeat fascism. It pinned down 15 Italian and German divisions, putting out of action 70,000 enemies killed, wounded and taken prisoner. 700,000 fascist troops trampled the 28,000 square kilometres which is the total area of Albania. For every square kilometre one freedom fighter gave his life. Whole districts and cities were razed to the ground. The economy of the country was totally devastated.

On the eve of liberation, the Albanian National Liberation Army had in its ranks 70,000 partisans incorporated in three Army corps (six divisions).

The great victories of the National Liberation War became the

basis of the post-liberation victories. Always under the leadership of the Communist Party (now Party of Labour) of Albania, Albania is marching with sure steps towards the complete construction of socialism.

### III.

## POPULATION, STATE ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

### POPULATION

Albania has about 2,430,000 inhabitants (census of 1975). This population is more than double that of 1938. At present the number of births is 30.6 per thousand and that of deaths 7.2 per thousand. Males make up about 51.5 per cent of the population.

The density of population is 84 persons per square kilometre as against 39 in 1945. The greatest density of population is to be found in the western part of the territory. Our policy of socialist industrialization and the harmonious development of the districts has brought about a large increase of population in certain districts which used to be less densely populated. For instance, the Myzeqeja zone, which used to be very backward, has now become one of the most densely populated, with over 100 inhabitants per square kilometre, because of the land improvement schemes carried out and the creation of important industrial centres during the years of our people's state power.

As a result of the concern for the health and well-being of the people, the average life span has reached 68 years as against 38 in 1938.

A characteristic of the period of our people's state power is increase of the number of workers, and especially the increase of the participation of women in production. At present, women make up 47 percent of the total number of workers and employees.

The class structure of socialist society in Albania is characterized by the existence of two friendly classes, namely the working class and the cooperative peasantry as well as the stratum of the people's intelligentsia. The working class is the leading class. Its proportion in our population has constantly increased as a result of the socialist industrialization of our country. The working peasantry has turned into a cooperative peasantry. For several years now socialist relations of production have been fully established in agriculture. The stratum of intellectuals has also undergone major qualitative changes during the period of our people's state power. Under the care of the Party of Labour of Albania, a new people's intelligentsia, originating mainly from the working class and the working peasantry, has been created.

In 1975 the urban population made up 34.4 percent of the population of the country, as against 15.4 percent in 1938. The number of towns now is nearly threefold that of 1945. The old towns are being reconstructed, too, with wide, asphalted streets, multi-storeyed modern buildings, cultural and sports institutions, parks and gardens.

The most important cities are: Tirana (192,000 inhabitants) the capital and leading industrial and cultural centre of the country, Shkodra (62,400), Durrës (60,000), Vlora (55,500), Elbasan (53,300), Korça (52,000), Berat (30,000), Fier (28,000), Gjirokastra (22,000) and Lushnja (21,000).

## STATE ORGANIZATION

Albania is a People's Socialist Republic.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania is the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which expresses and defends the interests of all the workers. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania is based on the unity of the people and has at its roots the alliance of the working class with the cooperative peasantry under the leadership of the working class.

The Party of Labour of Albania, the vanguard of the working class, is the sole political leading force of the state and society. Marxism-Leninism is the dominant ideology. On the basis of its principles, the entire socialist social order is run.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania uninterruptedly carries forward the revolution adhering to class struggle and it has the aim of ensuring the final triumph of the socialist road over the capitalist road and achieving the complete construction of socialism and communism.

In the People's Socialist Republic of Albania the entire state power emanates from and belongs to the people.

The working class, the cooperative peasantry and other workers exercise their power through their representative organs and directly.

The representative workers are elected by the people by general, equal, direct and secret ballot.

The electors have the right to recall their representative at any time when he has lost the political trust of the masses or when he fails to fulfill the tasks assigned to him or when he acts contrary to the law.

— The working class, as the leading class of our society, as well as the masses of the other workers exercise direct organized control over the activity of the state organs, of the economic and social organizations and their workers in order to defend the achievement of the revolution and to consolidate the socialist order.

— Citizens 18 years and over are entitled to elect and to be elected to the organs of the state power. The only people who do not have the right to vote are those who have been exempted from this right by the verdict of the court, as well as those who are mentally handicapped, proclaimed such by the court.

The representative organs are of the greatest importance in the system of state organs. These organs consisting of the People's Assembly at the centre and the People's Councils at the base, are the only organs which realize the state power in the country. They make up the whole foundations of the state apparatus, all the other state organs depend upon and render account to them.

The representative organs are real work institutions and at the same time, executive. Just as Marx and Lenin instructed on the representative institutions, which the proletariat sets up when it becomes the ruling class, the representative institutions in Albania are made up of people who themselves work, carry out their own decisions, supervise what is carried out and render direct account to their electors.

The highest representative organ of our country is the People's Assembly, which bears the sovereignty of the nation and of the state, and exercises all the sovereign rights on the basis of the Constitution. Representatives to the People's Assembly are elected every four years and carry out their activity in sessions.

During the time when the People's Assembly is not in session, the high state functions are exercised in its name by the Presidium of the People's Assembly within the limits of the competences left to it by the Constitution. The Presidium of the People's Assembly is also the leading collegial organ of the state. The Presidium is the organ of the People's Assembly itself, elected by the latter and renders account to it for all its activity.

Part of the representative organs are also the People's Councils, which exercise their functions as organs of state power in their respective territorial-administrative units. The People's Councils are elected every three years and enjoy important competences in all matters of socialist construction within the units where they exercise their activity.

The administrative functions are a special form of our state activity. The Council of Ministers is the highest organ of our administration whereas at the base this function is fulfilled by the Executive Committees of the People's Councils. These organs are elected by the representative organs and render account to them; the Council of Ministers by the People's Assembly and the Executive Committees by the People's Councils.

The People's Courts engage in meting out justice. Through their activity, they exert a major educational influence not only on the persons brought before court but also on all others.

Finally, the organs of the Attorney General are the fourth kind of our state organs. They handle the supervision on the accurate implementation of the law by everyone, by the state organs, social organs or citizens.

But, although each of these state organs has its own characteristics and, on this basis, the corresponding competences, it is important to mention that all these organs are in close connection and permanent collaboration among them.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania is divided into

twenty-six administrative districts.

The main districts from the point of view of their economic and cultural development are:

The district of **Tirana** which provides one-fifth of the total industrial output of the Republic. All of the branches of Albanian industry, especially the engineering, textile, building materials, chemical and food processing industries have been developed in Tirana. Tirana is also the greatest cultural centre. About one-eighth of the entire population of the country live in this city.

The district of **Durrës** is the second in the Republic from the point of view of economic development. It provides more than one-tenth of the industrial output of the Republic and is most noted for its engineering, chemical, light and food-processing industries. Durrës is the principal seaport of the country.

The district of **Shkodra** stands out, among other things, for the production of copper wire and electric cables, electric power production, food-processing industry and, especially, for tobacco processing.

The district of **Elbasan** has now become one of the most important in the country with the setting up of the metallurgical and other branches of industry.

The district of **Fier** has undergone strikingly rapid industrial development. From a completely agricultural district, nowadays it is known for its electrical, oil and chemical fertilizer industries. Fier is an entirely new city. Profound transformations have been made in agriculture in this district. The former swamps and marshes have been completely drained and agricultural output has increased many times over in comparison with the past.

The district of **Korça** occupies an important place in the Republic for both industrial and agricultural production. This district stands out for the precision instruments industry, the sugar, knitwear, carpet, footwear and other industries. It is a very highly developed agricultural district.

The district of **Vlora** is represented by the cement, mineral, electric lamp, chemical and food-processing industries. The port of Vlora is the second port after that of Durrës. There are big olive and citrus fruit plantations.

In the district of **Berat** an important place is occupied by the textile, mining and food-processing industries. Berat is an

ancient city with extremely picturesque architecture and great tourist value.

The district of **Kruja** used to have no industry whatsoever while at present it is the principal producer of cement and superphosphate fertilizer. At the same time it is a prosperous agricultural centre. In history it figures as the capital at the time of Skanderbeg. The castle and museum dedicated to that time are of special interest to the visitors.

The district of **Gjirokastra** is represented mainly by the light, food-processing and engineering industries. The city of Gjirokastra occupies a special place for its architecture. It is built around a well preserved castle and is truly a museum in this direction. The National Museum of Arms is in this city.

The district of **Lushnja** was an entirely backward agricultural district. Now, as a result of large-scale reclamation work, it has been transformed into a main producer of food grain and industrial crops.

The district of **Saranda** on the Ionian seacoast stands out for the rapid development of citrus orchards and its bountiful plains.

Before liberation the district of **Mirdita** was considered as the most backward one of the country whereas now it is the principal district for mining and processing copper. The centre of the district represents quite a new town.

The district of **Puka** stands out for its timber and minerals.

The district of **Kukës** stands out for its mineral industry especially, for mining and treating copper ore. The centre of the district is an entirely new city which keeps growing in size.

Before the establishment of our people's state power, many of our districts were particularly backward economically. They had no industry at all while their agriculture was extremely backward. In the years of our people's state power the various regions of the country have been developed in a proportional manner and now these zones are all flourishing. This strikes one's eyes in the districts of Puka, Mati, Gramshi, Dibra, Pogradec, Kruja, Kukës, Skrapar and others. In these districts, too, alongside the all-round development of agriculture, important industrial branches have been and are being set up such as the mining, electric power, engineering, cement and other industries, besides the factories to process agricultural and dairy products. Now one can no longer speak of "backward regions" in Albania.

## IV. THE ECONOMY

The seizure of political power by the Albanian people in November 1944 was a great historic victory. But the consolidation of this power presented very great difficulties. The new state power and the people were faced with major economic tasks.

Before the Second World War, Albania was the most backward country in Europe economically. The plunder and devastation perpetrated by the fascist invaders made the situation even more difficult. In proportion to its population and size, Albania was one of the European countries which suffered the heaviest damages. But, under the guidance of the Communist Party (now the Party of Labour) of Albania, the people courageously set about the job of the restoration and rapid development of the economy. With confidence in their own strength, they embarked on the road of the revolution to build the economic base of socialism both in town and in countryside.

During 1945, some of the factories, electric power stations, and mines were put into operation. The peasants were mobilized for the sowing, and the rebuilding of houses. The youth undertook the heaviest burden of the reconstruction.

The state began to take revolutionary steps to give the working people the principal means of production which had been concentrated in the hands of foreign and local capitalists. Laws were passed to levy extraordinary taxes on those who had accumulated large profits from the war. Under the political conditions, when the state power had begun to fulfil the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was possible and necessary to embark on carrying out transformations of a socialist character. Thus, a series of complex revolutionary steps were taken in the economic field. In December 1944 the mines and the property of political fugitives became state property. Later on, the National Bank, the other banks and the assets of 111 share-holding companies owned by foreign capitalists and all the big capitalist assets passed over to the state without

compensation. This meant that the key position of the economy passed into the hands of the state. The most acute problem in the domain of agriculture was to do away with the old agrarian relations. And this was achieved by the land reform. The land was given, free of charge, to those who tilled it.

The socialist socialization of the principal means of production put an end to the economic domination of the bourgeoisie, while laying the foundations of the new socialist economy.

Under these circumstances, it became possible for the economy to develop rapidly, in a planned and harmonious way. Concrete tasks were set for the development of the country for the various stages of the five-year plans. From one five-year plan to another, Albania, once a backward agrarian country, has now become an agrarian-industrial country with prospects of becoming an industrial-agrarian one with advanced agriculture.

## INDUSTRY

Today the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has a highly developed modern multibranched industry. Industry has become the leading branch of the economy and gives a dynamic character to the increase of the productive forces of the country and the development of all sectors of the national economy. The average rate of increase of total industrial production for the period 1951 to 1965 was 6.8 percent. Albanian industry turns out at present 3.9 times as much as in 1960. These high rates have brought about a considerable increase of industrial production per head of population. The population has slightly more than doubled in comparison with 1938, while the total industrial production has increased more than 97 fold. The production of the means of production during the years of our people's state power has increased at a higher rate than that of consumer goods, and, at present, the specific weight of the former is higher than that of the latter. This priority given to the branches producing means of production will be increased in the future since our country is moving in the direction of its further industrialization.

The priority development of the industry of means of production has made it possible to achieve big successes in the industry of means of consumption.

Parallel with the development of industry there has been an

increase in the number of workers. In 1975 the working class was 27 times larger than in 1938. This number keeps increasing.

Along with the development of production in all the branches of our economy, in the context of industrial development special attention has been attached to the harmonious development of all the districts, to the economic uplift of the less developed districts and towns, so that industry will have a more powerful development in regard to its geographical distribution, too. Ever greater attention is being attached to the mechanization and automation of the processes of production in order to ensure higher productivity at work, for a more rapid development of the forces of production and to lighten people's work, and to raise their standard of living even higher.

The industry of our country is characterized by a very great variety of products based mainly on the different local resources of mineral and agricultural raw materials.

### THE PRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC POWER

Because of the very weak industrial development of the country, as well as the failure of the former regimes to interest themselves in evaluating the resources of the country, the production of electric power prior to the National Liberation War was very low. With the establishment of the people's state power, special attention was attached to the development of electric power.

In 1975 the production of electric power was 177 times as high as before the war and 8.5 times greater than in 1960. Hydropower plants hold first place in the production of electric power and their specific weight is continually increasing as a result of the construction of ever more powerful stations. The thermal and hydropower plants have been linked in a unified national power grid, which extends all over Albania. The production of electric power provides about 4 percent of total industrial production. The electric reticulation of the entire country was completed on November 25, 1970, bringing electric light to the most remote village of Albania.

### THE PETROLEUM, NATURAL GAS, COAL AND BITUMEN INDUSTRY

This provides about 8 percent of total industrial production.

The principal place is held by the extraction and refining of crude oil. The exploitation of the old oil fields, which had been reduced to the minimum on the eve of liberation, has been intensified and new oil fields have been discovered and brought into operation. The efforts have not been confined just to the extraction of crude oil, but have also been directed to processing it in the various specially built refineries. Some by-products of crude oil such as bitumen, are exported. The petroleum industry will further increase as regards both extraction and refining. Almost completed is a deep processing oil refinery with a capacity equal to all the existing oil refineries taken together.

Another valuable source of energy is natural gas, which is extracted not only from the oil fields but also from other places. In our country natural bitumen, which is famous for its high quality, is extracted, too.

Our coal is the lignite type. Big reserves have been discovered. The production of the coal industry in 1975 was 235 times greater than in 1938. This rapid increase has made it possible to cope with the increasing needs of industry for fuel. Today the mines are provided with electric light and power and modern means and methods are used. Among the new projects built in this branch of industry in recent years is a big plant to process the coal.

## THE MINING OF METALS AND METALLURGY

Among the various minerals of our country, there are important industrial reserves of chromium, iron-nickel and copper ores, which constitute a sound basis for the successful development of our heavy industry. In 1975 the production of the chromium industry had increased 112 times as against 1938; that of the copper industry 65 times. In our five-year plans priority is given to the development of the mineral industry over the other branches of industry so as to strengthen the branches producing means of production. A number of plants and factories have been and are being set up to enrich and process the minerals. Thus in regard to copper, the processes run from mining the ore to producing blister copper and copper wires. Iron and steel production is under construction in Elbasan. A metallurgical plant to handle ferro-chrome ore is also under construction.

## THE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

Before liberation the engineering industry consisted of a few workshops which engaged in repair and maintenance of motor vehicles and farm tools. Today it has a powerful technical basis and not only repairs machinery but also turns out spare parts for industry, agriculture and transport and produces various agricultural machines, diesel engines and various machines and mechanisms for the sectors of economy as well as precision instruments. The mechanical engineering industry produces about 13 percent of the total industrial production, and is one of the main branches producing means of production. The output of the engineering industry in 1975 was 308 times greater than in 1938.

## THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

The heavy chemical industry (the production of superphosphates, nitrate fertilizers, caustic soda and soda ash, oil paints, etc.) holds first place. But the light chemical industry, too, (rubber and plastic goods, pharmaceutical products, perfumes), is assuming ever greater development, especially the branch of plastic products, for the development of which, in addition to the factories producing plastic goods, a plant for the production of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is being built. The output of the chemical industry in 1975 was 25 times greater than in 1960.

## THE GLASS AND CERAMIC INDUSTRY

This is an entirely new industry in our country. It keeps growing. Now, by and large, it meets all the needs of the country for its products. Glassware is produced in Tirana, Korça, Durrës and other towns.

## THE BUILDING MATERIALS INDUSTRY

This industry had been developed to a certain extent also in the past. But the setting up of new industrial projects, the development of housing, buildings for social and cultural purposes etc. have required the rapid development of the building materials industry. Thus, in 1975 the output of this industry was 185 times greater than in 1938, and has been

enriched with new branches which did not exist in the past. The main branch of the building materials industry is that of the production of cement and its derivatives represented by up-to-date factories set up in Vlora, Elbasan, FushKruj etc. The production of cement in 1975 was 64 times greater than in 1938. Linked with the production of cement is the production of cement blocks and pipes, asbestos cement sheets and pipes and prefabricated details which are now produced in large quantities. The production of bricks and tiles has also increased as a result of the construction of a series of modern factories in the principal cities. A new branch, that of cutting marble slabs based on the many and beautiful marbles of the country, has been added to the building materials industry.

### THE TIMBER AND PAPER INDUSTRY

One of the biggest resources of Albania are its forests. The value of the products of this industry has been increased manyfold and its specific weight is double that of 1938. The wood-working branch, which occupies first place, has been enriched with up-to-date combines and plants like that of Elbasan which turns out a wide range of assortments like seasoned and treated timber, plywood, veneer, parquet blocks, furniture and other timber products, that of Laç, which in addition to sawn and seasoned timber, also turns out parquet blocks, and that of Tirana, the largest of its kind in the territory for furniture manufacture which also produces seasoned timber and a type of fibreboard.

The paper industry is set up anew and is represented by three factories which turn out various products such as writing and wrapping paper, paper bags, cardboard and hardboard. This branch is being enlarged with a big paper mill which is almost completed and which will be producing all kinds of paper.

### LIGHT INDUSTRY

Occupies about 1/5th of the total industrial production. It meets most of the needs of the country and increases from one year to another the number of articles earmarked for export. The most important industries of this sector are two modern textile mills with the capacity of 20 million metres of cotton fabrics a year, the knitwear combine in Korça, the rubber-processing

plant in Durrës, the footwear factories, the factory for plastic goods and so on. The textile industry turns out a wide range of cotton, woolen, synthetic and silk fabrics. Clothing manufacture has been greatly extended. The textile and clothing manufacture branches also produce for export. Footwear production, which was formerly of an artisan character, has now been enriched with modern factories and meets the needs of the country.

### FOOD-PROCESSING INDUSTRY

This branch continues to hold a high specific weight in global industrial production. In addition to the existing branches, many new branches like those of refining sugar, of canning fruit and vegetables, meats and fish, of brewing wines, of processing milk, of manufacturing washing machines, refrigerators and so on, have been set up. The food-processing industry produces also for export, especially canned fish, fruits and vegetables, alcoholic beverages etc.

### TRANSPORT

The volume of internal transport of goods by motor vehicles, railroads and merchantmen in ton/kilometres in 1975 was 155 times above that of 1938 while inter-urban passenger transport has increased 595 times.

Pride of place is held by road transport which 3/4th of the annual total of goods and 4/5th of the passengers. Now the total length of motor roads is more than double that of 1938. A good part of these roads have been asphalted. The number of goods and passenger transport vehicles has increased manyfold. Motor transport now penetrates deep into the mountain regions of the interior which were inaccessible before.

Rail transport holds second place. It handles about 1/4th of the total goods and about 1/5th of the passenger transport. The first railroad in Albania was built in 1948. From that date onward rail transport has kept increasing both in the length of track in operation as well as in the number of locomotives and wagons.

Sea transport was very limited in the past and was carried on mainly by foreign ships. During the Second World War, even that poor national merchant fleet was destroyed by the enemy. Thus, after liberation it was necessary to start from scratch in this direction. The ports which had been destroyed by the enemy were

restored and continually improved. Shipyards were set up to build small boats while high tonnage ships were imported.

Now, our national merchant fleet plies the seas and oceans of the world and its importance in overseas transport of goods is steadily increasing. The capacity of our seaports, especially that of Durrës, which is our main port, is constantly rising.

## AGRICULTURE

Albanian agriculture is organized completely on a socialist basis. All the peasant economies, in the lowlands and in the mountain regions, have been organized into agricultural cooperatives.

In the past, Albania had the most backward agriculture in Europe. After the establishment of our people's state power, the overthrow of feudal bourgeois relations in the countryside as well became an urgent task. This was absolutely essential if we were to develop agriculture and create the premises for building socialism in the countryside.

The first step in this direction was the implementation of the slogan "the land belongs to him who tills it", which the Party had launched as early as during the National Liberation War.

The first step to implement the Party programme for the socialist transformation of the countryside was the application of the land reform laws. Considering the agrarian reform laws as the first revolution in the social-economic relations in the countryside, Comrade Enver Hoxha has emphasized: "**The typical characteristic of this revolution was the democratic transformation of the relations of land, the ultimate elimination of the survivals of feudalism, the liquidation of the class of land estate holders.**"

The landless and land-poor peasants were impatiently waiting for the proclamation of the land reform laws and their application. The land reform laws were issued on August 29, 1945, only nine months after liberation and the establishment of the people's state power.

The basic principle of the land reform laws was to give the land to those who tilled it. The land, trees and draft animals, which had belonged, previously, to the big estate owners, feudal gentry, merchants and other exploiters, were confiscated. They were distributed by the state to the landless or land-poor peasant

families at the rate of 5 hectares per household. At the same time, the buying, selling, or alienation of land was prohibited. The old debts incurred by peasants were cancelled. The Agrarian Reform, which was completed within 14 months, brought about a profound transformation in the social relations and the mentality of the peasantry, who saw in it the realization of their age-old dream of land and getting rid of their bondage to the landlord. The antagonistic contradictions, which had existed for centuries between the labouring peasantry and the large estate owners were solved, and the way was opened to a speedy development of the forces of production.

The land reform laws were of a revolutionary character also because of the method by which they were carried out. The committees of the poor peasants rendered a valuable contribution by helping in a practical way to register the lands of the large estate holders, of the enemies of the people and of all those whose lands were confiscated by law. They fought to lay bare the hostile activities of the landlords, of the wealthy peasant farmers and of other reactionary forces who rose right at the beginning against the application of the land reform laws.

The application of the land reform laws created new conditions for our countryside. With the new base which it set up for the transformation of the semi-slave into a free peasant, the agrarian reform laws were a necessary premise for all the economic, cultural and social transformations which would be made during the subsequent stages in the countryside.

During the Agrarian Reform the foundations were laid, also, for the creation of the state socialist sector in agriculture. The first state farms were set up on part of the confiscated land, while the forests and waters were turned into the collective property of the people as a whole.

The Party of Labour of Albania was well aware that with small fragmental economies, agriculture could not get out of the deplorable backwardness, which it had inherited from the past, and the harmonious and speedy development of all the branches of our people's economy could not be ensured. Both in the city and in the countryside, the people's state power had to have its own advanced socialist base. The collectivization of agriculture was essential and the only way to ensure the victory of socialism in the countryside. Thus, side by side with the wide-ranging work

for land improvement and protection, the mechanization of agriculture, the development of agricultural crops, animal husbandry, and so on, a major struggle was waged for the collectivization of agriculture, which, in line with the Party's consistent and cautious directives, was gradually spread throughout the country including in the end, even the Highlands.

The collectivization of agriculture was carried out in a number of periods. The first period lasted about ten years from 1946 to 1955. The slogan applied during the first period was "In the matter of collectivization we should not be hasty, but neither should we mark time."

The cooperatives which were set up in this period played a very great role in creating conviction of the superiority of the collective property over the individual economies. The ten years that followed (1956-1966) were characterized by the forming of cooperatives on a mass scale not only by the poor but also by the middle peasants, in nearly all the villages of the country with the exception of those high in the mountains.

At this time and on the basis of the socialist transformations, which had taken place in agriculture, on the basis of the general development of the country, the political-economic-social conditions had been set up to wind up the process of collectivization of the countryside also in the mountain regions. Summing up the experience gained and taking into account that the social-economic conditions had already been created, the 5th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania issued the directives in November 1966 to complete the collectivization of agriculture. The Congress stressed "It is not the topographic factor which determines the socialist relations in production, but the economic-social premises and the conscience of the people. These premises have long existed in our country. Under these circumstances, the establishment of socialist relations in production, through collectivization, also in mountain regions which have not yet been collectivized, depends only on the people, on their conscience."

The orientation of the Party was adopted with enthusiasm and in full consciousness by the labouring peasantry of the mountain regions. Within a very short time, in less than three months, collectivization was successfully established also in mountain regions.

The collectivization of agriculture in Albania was carried out as an uninterrupted revolutionary process, which built up steadily without any disorder. It was accompanied everywhere and always with an upsurge of the self-activity of the peasants who took an active part in the socialist transformation of the countryside and of the country as a whole. Their political consciousness and ideological level increased day by day. At the same time, agricultural production marked a turn such as the past had never known, liquidating the devastating consequences of the foreign invasions and pulling agriculture out of the backward state in which the former anti-popular regimes had left it.

From their experience of life and thanks to the great efforts of the Party to explain things to them, the peasants were convinced of the superiority of the cooperative order, the only order which could lift them out of want and rescue them from any exploitation. The world outlook of the peasantry underwent a radical change. The psychology of individual work of the small-scale private property and narrow personal interest began, more and more, to give way to the feeling and consciousness of the common property, collective work and large-scale socialist production.

The successful conclusion of the collectivization of agriculture was rightly called the second revolution in the social-economic relations in the countryside.

The programme of the socialist transformation of the countryside was carried out in stern class struggle against the kulaks and other enemies of the people's state power. In this struggle the labouring peasantry had the powerful backing of its ally, the working class.

The process of uniting the cooperatives, which had been set up first on the basis of the village, into larger cooperatives, was carried out step by step and in a prudent way. This process was necessary for it created new opportunities to strengthen them organizationally and economically, to make better use of the state investments and other aid, to concentrate production and take advantage of the superiority of the large-scale collective property, to put agriculture on a better scientific basis.

Today, the agricultural cooperatives have an average of over 1,000 hectares of land each. As a rule, in the lowlands the

agricultural cooperatives have from 2 to 3 thousand and more hectares of land, while in the mountains they have from 600 to 800 hectares. Combining the small cooperatives into enlarged agricultural economies, also created possibilities for a more harmonious development of the villages of the same cooperative, thus further narrowing their differences in production and the social-cultural field.

Experience has shown us that the construction of socialism in the countryside does not end with the accomplishment of collectivization and the union of the cooperatives. The property of the cooperative is the property of a group and as such it is of a transient and historical character. In time, it must be turned into the property of the people as a whole. This process is relatively long and passes through a number of stages like that of approaching the two forms of ownership and then of turning the property of the group into the property of all the people, forming in this way a form of property, that of all the society.

Under the conditions of our country, it is very important and actual to map out the right course for the initial stage of this process.

The setting up of the cooperatives of the higher type in the lowlands serves this purpose. This is an original way mapped out by the Party of Labour of Albania in bringing closer the two forms of ownership: that of the group with that of the whole society. This is an intermediary form of turning the property of the group into that of the whole society. Thus, the collective property gradually loses its transient character.

Now the cooperatives of the higher type occupy nearly 18 percent of the arable land of the Republic. The main distinctive feature of the cooperatives of the higher type is the participation of the state in the development of production with non-repayable social means for investments, a thing which is not done in ordinary cooperatives. This participation of the state with investments is done only for the development of the productive forces.

Another feature of these cooperatives is the transition from payment on the basis of work days performed to guaranteed wages, according to quotas realized. The amount of remuneration for each cooperative is determined according to its economic potential and is guaranteed up to 90 percent. In these

cooperatives too, the remuneration for work continues to be connected with the results attained in production.

Different from the ordinary agricultural cooperatives, those of the higher type, after setting aside their seed and the fodder for the livestock etc., repay their debts and sell all the rest of the products, including bread grain, to the state. The state organs, on their part, guarantee to supply the members with bread at a fixed price.

The collectivization of agriculture and the work done to intensify and modernize it, have brought about a new revolutionary situation in our countryside. In work and in life our cooperative peasants are being educated and tempered with the features of communist morality, with the socialist stand towards work and the collective property.

The increase of mechanization, the land improvement and irrigation projects, the large scale use of chemicals, the ever better application of advanced agricultural technique, the extension of the network of communications, etc., the increase in the number of specialized cadres and the general rise in the educational level of the peasant, have created the appropriate material conditions to carry out intensive modern agriculture in breadth and depth, to raise the cultural and living standards of the masses of the cooperative members to a higher level, to bring production and life in the countryside ever closer to that of industry and the city.

Our country has long created stability in agricultural production with an average yearly increase of 5 percent.

Now the extensive network of scientific institutions extends all over the country. With their assistance within a record time, a series of studies decisive for the modernization and intensification of agriculture have been carried out, such as the results of the study of soils and the drawing of the pedological-agrochemical map of every cooperative, the study of the climate of the country and the kinds of plants most suitable to it; the local production of selected seeds for all agricultural crops, including wheat yielding over 40 quintals per hectare, hybrid maize yielding from 80 to 100 quintals per hectare, tobacco resistant to blight, and so on.

As early as 1973, there were fifty times as many cadres of higher training and forty times more cadres of medium training

engaged in agricultural work than before liberation. Today in Albania there are two Higher Agricultural Institutes and about 260 agricultural secondary schools. Ten Central Scientific Institutions and 26 agricultural stations in the various districts of the country are engaged in scientific work in agriculture.

The larger agricultural economies also created many advantages for the development of animal husbandry. Now an up-to-date and complex animal husbandry sector, based on correct technological and scientific criteria, has been set up and continues to develop. The main achievements in this field are the harmonious and proportional development of all kinds of livestock, the improvement of breeds and the organization of specialized units. Some of the state farms have large herds of milk cows and ensure regular supplies of dairy products for the city. Other enterprises specialize in raising livestock for meat. Many state farms and agricultural cooperatives have specialized units raising pigs, sheep and goats as well as poultry.

The new Albanian socialist countryside today is in a process of rapid development and transformation affecting the field of production and the social and cultural field. This revolutionary process of development of the forces of production in agriculture and of the improvement of socialist relations in the countryside will lead, in the future, to the transformation of the agricultural cooperatives from the property of a group of persons into the property of all the people, to the liquidation of the differences between the cooperatives and the state farms in order to bring about the complete construction of socialism in the countryside, to gradually narrow, and then do away altogether, with the essential differences between town and countryside, between the peasantry and the working class. This has been and continues to be, one of the fundamental objectives of the general line of our Party for the construction of socialism in our country. To this end, the Party of Labour of Albania has carried out and continues to carry out a broad programme of measures of a profound ideological, political, economic, social and cultural character. The continuous aid of the state to the countryside in the form of agricultural machinery, chemical fertilizers, credits, cadres of higher training, the setting up of the complete network of educational and public health institutions, the building of an extensive network of buildings for social and cultural purposes

and the extension of the system of pensions to the countryside, the extension of scientific work, the electrification of all the villages and building of the network of motor highways and telephone lines in the countryside and a number of other similar measures, are important steps taken to attain this objective of the Party of Labour of Albania in connection with the countryside.

The decisions of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour and the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania of April 1, 1975 constitute an especially important step in this direction. On the basis of the new stage of the development of socialist production in the country and the new relations between town and countryside, between the working class and the peasantry, the leading organs of the Party and of the state adopted a new programme of measures which will carry the Albanian countryside further on the road to socialism. Among the decisions of April 1st, were the following measures:

"In order to further narrow the differences between town and countryside and, within the countryside, between the plains and the hilly and mountainous zones, in order to raise the economic, social and cultural level of the peasantry more rapidly as well as to further improve the conditions of work and life in the countryside, **the state is to take over** in the countryside: the expenditure for out-patient and consultation centres, maternity homes, kindergartens and nurseries for children; the salaries of the personnel of houses of culture in the centres of cooperatives; the investments for building schools, kindergartens and nurseries in the villages as well as houses of culture and public health institutions in the centres of agricultural cooperatives; the expenditure for the maintenance of the electric power line network within the villages and telephone network to the centre of enlarged cooperatives.

"The Central Committee and the Council of Ministers are in favour of raising the percentage of pensions for the cooperative members, bringing it to the same level as that of city workers; of raising the minimum pensions of cooperative members, of having the State Social Insurance meet the cost of maternity leave payments for cooperativist women; of bringing the percentage of maternity leave payments (in relation to normal earnings) to the same level as in the city.

To increase state investments in the hilly and mountainous

zones for building irrigation projects, for opening secondary canals and extending the existing network of irrigation projects; to cover partially or wholly the value of workdays in opening and systematizing new land and for creating new orchard blocks and vineyards, for financing by the state up to 50 percent of the value of workdays spent in radical pruning of olive trees, in building retaining walls around olive trees and planting olive saplings. In order to increase the number of draft animals, the state is to help the cooperative of the hilly and mountainous regions with financial means to buy them.

"To lower the price of nitrogenous fertilizers from 9 to 15 percent for the hilly and mountainous agricultural cooperatives.

"The Tractor and Machine Stations to meet the expenditure made by the agricultural cooperatives for the transport and storage of fuel and protection of agricultural machinery. Investments to build sheds for the Tractor and Machine Stations on the agricultural cooperatives to be financed by the state.

"The agricultural cooperatives of the hilly and mountainous regions to be exempted from paying bank interest on all the credits they have received and will receive in the future and the percentage of this interest for all the other cooperatives to be reduced."

Speaking about the policy of the Party of Labour of Albania towards the countryside, Comrade Enver Hoxha has said: "While attaching primary importance to the industrialization and mechanization of labour, at the same time, we, in no way underrate the countryside and are not proceeding to depopulate it, but are developing agriculture in harmony with it. While speaking of high yields in the plains, we do not overlook the rapid development of agriculture in the hilly and mountainous regions. Maintenance of the right proportions in this direction is very important to the cause of building socialism in our country, while allowing the creation of disproportion is fraught with disorder and grave economic, political, class and ideological consequences."

The implementation of such a line has meant that in Albania there has been no abandonment of the countryside, no ravaging of it, but, on the contrary, it has steadily developed both in the lowlands and in the mountainous regions. While carrying out the call of the Party "to take to the mountains and hills and make

them as fertile as the plains", the peasantry, backed by the state and the volunteers from the city youth, have created large plantations of fruit trees and other agricultural crops on the hills, on the mountainsides and along the coast, which used to be barren or covered with scrub. The creation of new villages with modern town planning, of farms on the newly brought in land have given the map of our homeland a new appearance and have placed agriculture on the road to rapid development and prosperity.

The collectivization of agriculture in Albania has its distinctive features. It was carried out under special social and economic conditions. In the first place it was carried out under the conditions of the existence of the small private ownership of the land. The experience of our country goes to show that where the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established, the collectivization of agriculture can be carried out successfully even where the nationalization of land has not been made but the land reform laws of a thoroughly revolutionary character have been implemented. This experience constitutes a creative development of Marxist-Leninist science, it shows that the initial nationalization of the land is no longer an objective necessity for all countries in order to carry out the collectivization of agriculture.

Another distinctive feature of the socialist transformation of the countryside is that in our country we did not wait for the productive forces to develop first and then to carry out the collectivization of agriculture, but we began to build new socialist relations in production without neglecting also the development of the forces of production. Had we waited to develop the forces of production and then to begin collectivization, we would have lost time in favour of capitalism and to the detriment of socialism, we would have caused great damage to the alliance of the working class with the labouring peasantry.

Our experience of socialist construction in the countryside goes to prove that collectivization should not be hampered artificially until a rapid development of the forces of production is ensured just as it should not be forced artificially before the necessary political, ideological and economic premises have been created.

Another distinctive feature of the collectivization of

agriculture in our country is also its cautious application when the ideo-political and social-economic conditions are ripe. The collectivization of agriculture in our country was carried out at a time when the modern revisionists had come to power in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries where this general law of socialist construction was sabotaged.

The collectivization of agriculture in our country was realized by pursuing the same policy in the development of the class struggle: the political alienation, the economic isolation and liquidation of the wealthy farmers as a class.

As a rule, in setting up agricultural cooperatives in our country, we did not wait to include all the peasants in cooperatives all at once, but we set up cooperatives with a relatively small number of peasants. This made it possible not to force collectivization in an artificial way.

**"The development of agriculture and the experience of building socialism in the countryside"**, as Comrade Enver Hoxha has said "prove the universal value of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism according to which, the only course to follow in building socialism in the countryside, in countries with chopped up agricultural economies, is the collectivization of agriculture. Any other course besides collectivization leads only to the development or restoration of capitalism in the countryside."

## BASIC INVESTMENTS

Basic investments and construction constitute one of the key problems of the economic policy of the socialist state. They take a major place in the State Plan of Economic and Cultural Development.

The volume, structure and distribution of basic investments and construction have increased and improved in a perceptible way from one five-year period to another, a thing which has led to the increase of the main funds of the country. In 1974, as against 1938 the total volume of investments was 259 times greater. During the same period, the volume of capital construction was 118 times greater than in 1938.

In the distribution of basic investments and construction priority has always been given to the sphere of material production, which absorbs more than 4/5th of the investments

made in the people's economy.

Basic investments and construction increased markedly especially during the 5th five-year period (1971-1975).

The fundamental characteristic of the last Five-Year Plan period (1971-75) was the increased volume of investments for the development of heavy industry. Major work was done on such projects as the black metallurgy complex, the power industry, the non-ferrous metal, chemical and other industries. Techniques and technology of advanced world standards, with a high level of concentration and productive and processing capacities were used. The volume in value of construction and installation work on the metallurgical complex and the deep oil processing plant alone is calculated to be equal to the combined volume of construction and installation work done on about thirty major industrial projects built in our country up to 1970. Now our country is building major industrial projects in such branches of the economy as the iron and steel, chemical, hydro-electric power, and other industries, which require relatively very much larger investments and longer periods of time than the projects of industry built in the past. Large investments have been and continue to be made in agriculture for land improvement, irrigation, mechanization and the use of chemicals for increasing the fertility of the soil and breed improvement of livestock, for increasing agricultural and livestock products.

Parallel with investments in the productive sectors, large financial funds go to the development of the social-cultural sectors (education, public health, housing municipal services, etc.)

#### FOREIGN TRADE

The foreign trade of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania reflects the uninterrupted development of our people's economy. It has increased from year to year parallel with the socialist industrialization and the development of the other branches of our economy. As compared with 1938, the rate of growth of our foreign trade has been as follows: seven fold in 1960, about thirteen fold in 1970 and about twenty-two fold in 1975.

In addition to chromium, iron-nickel, crude oil, bitumen, copper and other minerals, Albania also exports their by-products, such as concentrate of chromium ore, electric cables

and wires, products of the light and food-processing industry, of the chemical industry (soda ash, hyposulphite, fluosilicate, enomelised and other paints, acids), building materials (cement, silica bricks, marble slabs), oil by-products, aromatic essences and oils, fresh and preserved fruit and vegetables, wine, and so on.

Albania exports electric power. With the rapid development of industry in our country, the day is not far off when new items will be added to our list of exports from the iron and steel industry, oil refining, the chemical and other industries.

In 1974, fuels, minerals and metals made up 59 percent of our exports, while agricultural and livestock raw materials made up only 9.2 percent of our exports, as against 32.4 percent in 1950.

The following figures show the trend of the continuous improvement of the structure of our exports: in 1975, processed goods amounted to 62.4 percent, of the total volume of our exports.

To give a better idea of the qualitative progress of Albanian exports during the years of our people's state power, it should be pointed out that before the liberation of the country, Albania exported only a limited quantity of agricultural and livestock products, while it imported almost everything, from needles and buttons to fabrics and paper. Our underground resources were exploited by foreign companies.

Foreign trade is conducted in conformity with the foreign policy of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, first and foremost, through economic and trade relations with socialist countries especially with the People's Republic of China, on the basis of proletarian internationalism. Our country also maintains trade relations with a large number of other countries of different systems, while consistently upholding the principle of non-interference and mutual benefit.

## V. WELL-BEING

The ceaseless raising of the material well-being and the cultural level of the broad working masses is the supreme aim of the

socialist state. This stems from the very nature of the state, from the socialist system of the economy, from the fundamental economic law of socialism. In Albania the social classes and strata which linked their livelihood with oppression and exploitation have been liquidated. The establishment of the political power of the workers and peasants, and the socialist social ownership over the means of production, led to the establishment of equality among the working people in regard to means of production, to the liquidation of classes with opposing antagonistic interests, while in the economic field, particularly in the field of the distribution of production for personal use, this equality has been attained only to the extent that the economic revolution has been carried out. In the lower phase of the communist society, in socialism, the economic law of distribution according to work operates. The operation of this law is inevitable because our socialist social-economic order emerged from the feudal bourgeois order with a low level of productive forces, with hangovers from the old social distribution of labour and with all those blemishes in the consciousness of the people. Consequently, there are still differences of economic level among various people, but they are being steadily narrowed.

The economic policy of the socialist state has always aimed at unceasingly raising the material and cultural level of all the working people without allowing big differences between classes, social strata, specific groups and working people and at the same time, without falling into the positions of petty bourgeois egalitarianism.

In conformity with this principled Marxist-Leninist stand, in Albania, during the years of the people's state power, correct ratios have been established and applied between the increase of production and the national income, and the distribution and use of it in the funds of accumulation and consumption. The system of pay and remuneration of the working people has been constructed in such a way as to differentiate between heavy and light work, between qualified and simple work, without allowing big differences in the rewards for labour in different branches of the economy, particularly between town and countryside and within the ranks of the working people.

A decisive role in raising the well-being belongs to the increase

of the national income. This is a very important index which clearly shows the ever increasing economic potential of the country.

In our country the national income has risen at higher rates than the natural increase of the population. Whereas the national income in 1974 had risen 10.8 times as against 1938, the population had increased 2.3 times. In 1975, the national incomes increased five times above those of 1938 and had nearly doubled as compared with 1960. This has made it possible to raise the people's standard of living and, in conformity with the political and economic circumstances in which socialism is built in our country, to make new investments to exploit and put into economic circulation the natural resources and assets and to thus ensure ever higher rates of the extended socialist reproduction.

Therefore, not only the increase of the national income, but also the establishment and the preservation of correct proportions in its division into the fund of accumulation and the fund of consumption is a key political and economic problem. In our country, which is building socialism relying on its own forces, the norm of accumulation has always been relatively high: from 26.9% in the Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1960) to 28.7% in the Third Five-Year Plan (1961 to 1965) to 34% in the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1966 to 1970) and 34-37% in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1971 to 1975).

Along with the increase of the fund of accumulation, funds of individual and social consumption, which directly and indirectly raise the well-being of the people have steadily increased. In 1974, as against 1950, the fund of individual consumption had increased 7.5 fold. In the same year as against 1970, the real income of the workers and employees had increased 9.4%, whereas the income of the cooperativist peasantry had increased by 13.4%. This means that the purchasing power of the population has increased at rapid rates. In 1974 as against 1938, the turnover of retail goods had increased 13.1 times over. The expenditure of the state budget for social-cultural purposes per head of population in 1975 had increased about 8 times above 1950.

Compared with 1958 the prices of mass consumer goods are now from 8 to 25 percent lower.

The increase in the economic potential of the country and the

national income, in the fund of consumption and purchasing power, has made the Albanian currency, the lek, a stable currency.

Characteristic of the rise in the well-being of the working masses is not only the increase in the individual consumption fund, but also the steady increase of the social consumption fund. In our country, the monthly wage is not all the real income which the working people receive from society. An ever greater part of the national income goes in favour of the working people, such as the state expenditure on the education of the working people and their children, on social insurance and pensions, and other measures. For all of these, nothing is deducted from the pay of the Albanian worker. To finance this expenditure which goes to the benefit of the people, the state spends one quarter of its budget. And the tendency is for this item of expenditure in the state budget to increase from year to year.

The stability of prices, the removal of all taxes and levies, the reduction of house rents, charges for water, lighting and other services to the minimum, the employment of all the able-bodied population, the bringing of electric light into every Albanian home with state funds, the construction of motor roads and the telephone network to connect all the villages, all these things are important achievements and indices of the constant raising of the general well-being. Expenditure on such things is supplementary income for the working people. Consequently in 1974 as against 1960, the fund of social consumption rose 2.6 times as against the two-fold increase of the fund of individual consumption. In this way, as early as in the phase of socialism, the beginnings of the future communist society are created and strengthened.

### MEDICAL SERVICE

In the People's Socialist Republic of Albania medical service is given free of charge — hospitalization, visits, analysis, treatment at ambulances, doctor's visit to the home of the sick and so on. Our socialist state has undertaken this humane task and has spared nothing to ensure for the people total coverage by a qualified medical service established on a scientific basis. Today we have extended the network of health institutions even to the most remote districts. Our hospitals are new and with all the essential services. We have sanatoria, maternity homes, day

nurseries for babies, dispensaries, health institutions for scientific studies, institutions of a hygiene-sanitation character, a wide network of institutions for treatment of dental ailments, for supplying drugs, a pharmaceutical industry and so on. In Albania there is one doctor, including stomatologists, serving every 780 persons whereas in 1938 the figure was one doctor to 8,527 persons. In comparison with 1938, the number of hospital beds today increased 21 times. These and many other devices testify to the organization and planning on correct criteria for the proportional development of the entire medical service, providing it with the necessary conditions for normal work, the necessary personnel of higher training who constantly strive to serve the people conscientiously and with devotion.

In our treatment and prophylactic institutions a systematic struggle is waged against various diseases not only by treating but also by preventing them. Thanks to this prophylactic and curative work, from being the most malaria-ridden country in Europe, now we have not a single case of malaria in our country. We have other such major achievements in other diseases, too, which wrought havoc among our people in the past. Today, there is no trace of syphilis to be found in Albania while tuberculosis has been reduced to very few cases a year.

The mobilization of our health cadres, their continuing qualification, the political understanding of the problems of prophylaxis and health propaganda, the close contact of the doctors with the patients, their visits to peasant homes have resulted in obvious successes in recent years, especially in creating sound convictions among the people who are carrying out better and better Comrade Enver Hoxha's instruction that "*... we should educate the people to go to the doctor or the public health institutions not only when they are sick, but to go time and again for consultation and examination even when they feel well so that any disorder in the organism may be detected in time before it causes disturbing symptoms and pain.*"

In 1938, the average life expectancy in Albania was only 38 years. In 1950 it rose to 53.5 years and in 1974 to 68 years.

In order to form an accurate assessment of the health service of a country, it is necessary, to see, first and foremost, how the health of mother and child is looked after.

At present Albania has standards of obstetric-gynecological

and pediatric services such as many other countries might envy. There are sufficient maternity beds to accomodate all the expectant mothers in both town and countryside without exception. There are midwives in every village no matter how small it may be. There are day nurseries in every city and village in which a very high percentage of our young children are growing up. There is advanced legislation for paid leave for mothers before and after childbirth, for assuring them light work during pregnancy as well as the right to leave the job every three hours to breast feed their babies and so on. The provision of all medicines for children under one year of age, and supply of vitamins to expectant mothers and to their children after childbirth free of charge, the subsidizing of a conserable part of the cost of nurseries, etc. by the state are very important factors which exert an influence on continually improving the health of mother and child.

The state creates the best possible conditions for the broad masses so that they may spend their vacations guaranteed by law in the most cultural way at our most attractive mountain and seaside climatic resorts where very comfortable holiday homes have been set up. From year to year the number and capacity of our beaches is increasing.

The working people of town and countryside are guaranteed the necessary means of livelihood in old age, in case of illness or loss of capacity for work. Likewise, the state takes under special care the invalids of the National Liberation War, of the struggle in defense of the homeland and the invalids from work and creates conditions for their rehabilitation.

For all these obligations which our socialist state takes upon itself, large sums are spent by means of which the working people of every age and profession are assisted to maintain and strengthen their health.

The protection of the health of our people should be viewed in all its aspects.

Our state compels all investors to carry out all the measures that should be taken in order to protect the environment from pollution right from the first stages of work on new projects and so on. But in addition to investors the law also charges social organizations as well as every citizen with duties so that he himself may protect the environment from pollution and take a

stand and make it a problem when he notices any violation of this law which is related directly to the protection of the health of the working masses.

Now let us take up some special cases:

When a child is taken ill, the working mother has the right to remain at home to nurse the child for nine days in every three month period of up to thirty-six working days a year. For this period she is paid. If the doctor deems it necessary, the mother can be given supplementary unpaid leave to nurse a child through a long illness. If the child has to be hospitalized, the mother, particularly if she is breast feeding the child, can stay at the hospital to assist the child for as long as the doctor recommends it. For the whole of this period she is paid on the basis of the regulations of social insurance.

According to the sanitary legislation of our country, it is compulsory for every work centre to take measures for the prevention of occupational diseases of the workers in accordance with the work centre and the material handled by the workers. The work centre must secure the respective installations for ventilation or for the suction of harmful gases, smoke, dust during production processes and to remove in good time all waste and leftovers harmful to the environment. The work centre must supply the workers with individual means and clothing for protection during production. The workers must also utilize these means during work. They are subject to periodical medical examinations to make the necessary analysis at the laboratory and so on. No new worker is accepted at work without having a medical report which proves the condition of his health.

Every woman, as soon as she suspects that she is pregnant, reports to the women's consultation rooms, both in town and countryside. The consultant keeps the mother-to-be under constant control, follows the normal development of the child and when any difficulty arises, immediately sends the woman to the respective specialist. The pregnant women prepare themselves to receive their children following the advice of the midwife or the doctor who is in charge of them. They go through a health education course called "The School of Mothers" where they learn how to bring up their babies. A working mother who is breast feeding a child has the right to leave work every three hours to feed the child.

Our state spares nothing for the life of the handicapped children. It makes huge expenditure to return them to normal life. Special institutions have been set up in Albania to correct several congenital diseases such as luxation, coxac and others. In Albania there is also a central institution for mentally handicapped children where they are submitted to a psychological pedagogical treatment and any other respective treatment. The results are very satisfactory: many of these children have entered life as all the others.

The revolutionary triangle of our school system — lessons, production work and military training — operates in the Faculty of Medicine as well. Besides the lessons which are done in accordance with the teaching programmes and plans, the students also do practical medical work, beginning with the first year at the Faculty. For instance, first year medical students do one month's practical work of a nurse or sanitary worker. In accordance with their subjects, the practical lessons are done in the laboratories or at the patient's bedside and under the direct supervision of the assistants. The sixth year of the Faculty is almost all practical work at the surgeries of internal surgical illnesses, pediatric and obstetric-gynecological complaints. The relations between practical and theoretical work are harmonized so that the student is as capable as possible of meeting the requirements to properly treat the patient.

The doctor-patient relations, being disinterested (in our country, the doctor has no financial ties with the patient) are based on mutual respect and socialist humanism. The doctors respect their patients, they listen to them carefully and do their utmost to alleviate their suffering as much as possible. The patient nourishes also a great respect for the doctors and listens to every word they say. Now it has become a part of the daily practice of our doctors to maintain constant contact with the people, they meet with groups of workers, city dwellers and villagers and hold talks with them, lectures in order to raise to a higher level the culture and the sanitary education of the workers.

#### PRICES POLICY

In Albania, prices are fixed and standard throughout the Republic. Everywhere, north or south, the same commodity is bought and sold at the same price. All consumers are on an equal

footing. The prices are fixed in a centralized way. They are not influenced by the spontaneous supply and demand of the market.

Price is the expression of the value of a commodity in money. But this does not mean that the specific price of a commodity expresses its value, the necessary social work done for its production at all times. In our country, too, there are fluctuations of price above and below the value of the commodity, but these fluctuations do not occur under the spontaneous action of supply and demand but are done in a conscious way following well defined objectives. Thus, for instance, for the principal articles of prime necessity, the selling price is always around about their value. There are commodities such as pharmaceutical, clothing and other articles for children, which are sold at prices below their value. And this is done for the purpose of stimulating their use and favouring certain groups of society such as families with many children. At the same time there are articles which are sold at prices higher than their value such as luxury goods, the use of which is not essential. This group includes alcoholic beverages and others. In the same way, the prices of cotton and woollen fabrics as well as of garments made of them, are constructed in such a way as to direct the demands of the consumers more to ready-made garments rather than to bolt material. This is done for the purpose of extending the demand for ready-made garments because it is a well-known fact that the organization of serial production discloses new and greater possibilities for saving raw materials, for raising the qualification, specialization and productivity of labour, factors which tend to reduce the cost of production.

The aim of production in our country is not profit but fulfilment of the material and cultural needs of the working masses, to fulfil the needs of man. Between production and prices there is a reciprocal, dialectic connection. The lowering of prices leads to increased demand and, together with it, consumption. And this impels the producers to find new ways and possibilities to step up production in order to meet the needs of the consumers. In our planned economy, crises of overproduction are unknown.

The workers of our country do not feel the effects of the world economic crisis which has the capitalist and revisionist countries in its grip today, in the field of prices. The state covers

the fluctuations of the prices of imported goods with its own expenditure. Thus, the prices of essential goods like sugar, vegetable oils, medicines and so on, have not changed at all, although the prices of these goods in the international market have increased many times over in recent years.

In our country retail prices have only one course, that of steady reduction. There has not been a single instance of a price rise in any commodity. On the contrary, prices have been steadily reduced. There have been a number of general reductions in retail prices, benefitting the working masses to the extent of millions of leks. Of course, this is not the only way to increase the real wages of the workers. Along with the lowering of prices, the policy of raising the lower nominal wages of the workers is followed, too.

#### THE COUNTRY WHERE THE PEOPLE PAY NO TAXES OR LEVIES

In the structure and application of its whole policy of taxation on the population, the Party of Labour of Albania has always been aware that taxation is a temporary historical category. Therefore, step by step and with great care, it prepared the necessary conditions for eliminating it. On November 8, 1969, a measure of great importance was taken for the total abolition of the system of direct taxation on the population.

This measure is connected with the extension of the sphere of the establishment of socialist relations in production and with the rapid development of the productive forces of the country. Thus the specific weight of taxes and levies from the population in the total income of the state budget during the 1945-46 financial year (the first year after liberation) was 92 percent; in 1950 it fell to 12.6 percent; in 1960 it fell to 2.7 percent and in 1969 to 0.1 percent.

As can be seen, the process of abolishing taxes and levies from the population was not carried out all at once and simply by an administrative act, but they were abolished step by step, parallel with the development of the socialist sector of the economy, with the elimination of the economic basis of taxation, and with the change in the class structure in our country. This constitutes a major victory achieved by our people and is a brilliant example of the consistent implementation by our Party of Labour of its

general line for the construction of socialist society and constant improvement of the standard of living of the people.

Article 31 of the new draft Constitution says explicitly: "The citizens pay no taxes or levies of any kind."

The complete abolition of the system of taxes and levies, which the people used to pay in our country, is not only of major economic importance but of a major political and ideological importance as well. By eliminating taxes, the personal incomes which all the working people of our country, including the peasants, achieve from their work, are inviolate.

## THE ELECTRIC RETICULATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

On October 25, 1970, the electric lights went on in the last Albanian village, which had remained without electric power. In a symbolic way and to commemorate that day, this village in the Fier district, took the name "Dawn". From that day on, Albania entered the ranks of those few states which have achieved the electrification of all the villages.

Up to 1945 no village in Albania had electric power.

To bring light to all the peasant homes was a difficult and a very costly job. Nevertheless Albania did it, because it placed the interests, well-being, and happiness of the peasant above everything.

The electric reticulation of the countryside was done entirely at the expense of the state. The peasants paid nothing although they assisted in the work to carry this project through.

The geographic relief of our country is very mountainous. For historical-social reasons of the past, the houses of the villagers are built far away from one another. In some cases the distance between them runs to kilometres. The wire used to take the light to the countryside was enough to go several times around the circumference of the earth.

The electric reticulation of our villages paved the way to a profound revolution in the all-round development and transformation of the countryside. Together with the electric light, radio, television and many other household devices entered the peasant homes.

The use of electric power in the countryside has made possible a perceptible rise in the level of mechanization of agriculture,

which is increasing productivity of all agricultural crops and making the work of the peasant easier.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

The aim of labour legislation in Albania is to ensure the full implementation of the socialist principles "work is a duty and an honour", and "**from each according to his ability, to each according to his work**". Work for all and the implementation of these principles are guaranteed by the socialization of the means of production and the planned organization of our economy. In our country there are no economic crises or unemployment. Work has become the source of the well-being of everyone and the basis of our social system.

In the past many Albanians had to migrate in order to earn a livelihood. You would find them employed where the work was hardest and most difficult: in the coal mines of France or the United States of America, on the building jobs in Australia or the farms of Argentina. Most of the families of these emigrants experienced many family tragedies. That is why the places where the emigrants were farewelled were called by the people "The meadow of tears". Many songs of sorrow have been composed about the cursed migration, about the young brides left without their husbands, the children who did not know the fathers forced to go abroad to earn their daily bread.

In the Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania we read:

"Work is the foundation of the entire economic-social life of the country. Work constitutes the main source from which every citizen ensures the means of livelihood."

Thus, as has been the case up-to-date, the state has put the guarantee of work for every citizen at the foundation of the whole life of the country, as a right and a duty for every citizen. This is guaranteed by the political, economic and social conditions of the socialist order. It is based on the existence of the political state power of the working class, on the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat which runs the economy and the whole life of the country.

The principal laws dealing with the work and life of the working people, with employment, conditions of work, wages and social insurance, are drawn up after having solicited the

opinions of the workers and trade unions. This has made it possible to divest the labour laws of unnecessary complicated formulations and make them simple, clear and understandable to the masses, thus enabling them to check up on their application in practice.

The workers are guaranteed an 8-hour workday by law. For certain categories of workers engaged in difficult jobs the working day is reduced to 7, 6 or 5 hours, without any reduction in wages. Overtime work is not allowed except in special cases.

In addition to the weekly day off and official holidays, the workers and employees enjoy the right to an annual vacation with pay. A good number of workers, like those working in mines, metallurgy, chemical works, the oil industry, tobacco factories, the health service, education and culture, etc. are entitled to supplementary leave of up to thirty-six work days a year. In order to enable the workers to spend their vacations and relax in a pleasant environment, holiday homes have been set up which are used by tens of thousands of workers every year.

In the conditions of the further revolutionization of the school, in order to make it easier for the workers to attend courses while continuing with their jobs, the hours of work for those who are studying, are reduced and supplementary leave with full pay is granted them to prepare for and take their examinations. This supplementary leave is from three to six hours a week for part-time school attendance, from 15 to 25 days a year for taking examinations, and up to 30 days a year, for taking final examinations.

The law gives equal rights to men and to women on the basis of the principle "**equal pay for equal work**". The state gives special protection to women and minors. Pregnant women, nursing mothers and people with medical certificates, are not allowed to work night shifts or overtime, or do heavy work. Nursing mothers are entitled to not less than half an hour off work every 3-4 hours to feed their babies, plus the time necessary to travel from work to the nursery or home and back. This time off is included in their worktime. Working women also enjoy other facilities which enable them to take part en masse in production work and to carry out their duties as mothers and housewives.

In line with the principle that "**people are the most precious asset**", the Labour Code and other dispositions on safety at work

attach special importance to protecting the health and life of the workers. Thus, workshops, factories and other establishments where work goes on, are designed, built and utilized according to the rules of technical safety, sanitation and hygiene. The use of machines, mechanisms and installations, which present a danger is permitted only after they have been equipped with protective devices and when the workers have been given sufficient training in the use of these devices. The workers and employees on jobs liable to endanger their health are provided, free of charge, with protective clothing, and equipment (goggles, masks, helmets, earmuffs, gloves, boots and so on). In the branches of production, which emit dangerous gases and vapours, in addition to other protective devices, the workers are given antidotes. Such steps for the prevention of occupational diseases and accidents are a major factor in preventing temporary disability and invalidity from constituting a disturbing problem in our country.

In Albania, in addition to the free medical service, all workers and employees and members of agricultural cooperatives are guaranteed social insurance. The necessary funds for social insurance are provided entirely by the state and are a supplement to workers' wages and salaries. Social insurance provides for all eventualities covering the working people from before they are born, throughout their lives and their families after their deaths. Social insurance provides aid for the workers in case of temporary incapacity to work, ranging from 70 to 85 percent of their wages and payable from the first day of this incapacity. In case of incapacity because of injury at work or occupational disease, the compensation payment ranges from 95 to 100 percent of average earnings. Women workers and cooperativists are entitled to paid maternity leave from 13 to 15 weeks, paid at the rate of 80 percent of their average earnings.

Old age pensions for workers are differentiated on the basis of how difficult their work is. Full old age pensions are available to men who have reached the age of 50, 55 or 60 years with 20 or 25 years at work and the women at 45, 50 or 55 years of age with 15 and 20 years at work. The pension is paid at the rate of 70 percent of average earnings. Pensions are also paid to invalids, to those who lose the family breadwinner, and to those who have displayed special merits in the struggle for the freedom,

independence and socialist construction of the country.

Social insurance benefits also apply in the agricultural cooperatives. Maternity leave payments and the benefit for the birth of each child, as well as pensions, are paid in a centralized way by the State Social Security organs.-On the decision of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour and the government, which came into effect on April 1, 1976, the proportion of normal earnings payable in town and countryside in maternity, child-birth and age benefits, was equalized, and the minimum age benefit payable in the countryside was increased.

Social security payments for temporary incapacity to work are paid from the social security funds of the agricultural cooperatives, themselves.

State control over the application of the Labour Code and the laws on social insurance, ordinances, decisions and instructions is exercised by the supreme organs of the state, the social insurance organs, inspectorates of labour, safety at work and health. But the trade unions, the organizations of the working class, perform a very important function in this direction. They are extensively engaged in making the workers familiar with the laws so that they are rigorously applied, in fighting manifestations of bureaucracy and technocratism and in enforcing discipline on everybody.

Under the Labour Code, a worker has the right to complain about any disagreement to the trade union organization on his work centre, in the first place. In this way the role and authority of the trade unions is greatly enhanced. This is a very important democratic solution, because they are organizations of the workers themselves and have firsthand knowledge of the workers' conditions and what worries them.

## VI. THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

The progress of the Albanian women to their emancipation under the guidance of the Party of Labour of Albania is one of

the finest examples and has yielded brilliant results. The linking of the problem of women with national liberation and the treatment of this problem by the Party of Labour of Albania as an integral part of the uninterrupted socialist revolution not only ensured real conditions for the solution of all the problems of the women, but also made a contribution of great general value in this field.

Comrade Enver Hoxha has raised before the whole society that "**the Party and the working class should measure the advance towards the complete construction of socialist society with the deepening and progress of the women's revolution within our proletarian revolution. If the women lag behind, then, the revolution marks time.**"

Before the establishment of our people's state power the situation of the Albanian woman was appalling. Not only did she suffer oppression and poverty, as all the people suffered, but as well as this, she also suffered from discrimination, inequality with man, from feudal moral norms, from backward customs and religion. Often she was treated as a chattel — her father and his relatives sold her, her husband and his relatives bought her. Where the Moslem code prevailed, polygamy was permitted. According to these mediaeval laws, a young woman could be married off to an elderly man for the interest of the clan and for money. The birth of a girl was considered a misfortune and a burden on the family. In certain regions the woman was compelled to cover her face with a veil. Under these conditions, the participation of a woman in state employment was something quite extraordinary. Throughout Albania there were only 21 women teachers, two or three women doctors, not a single woman engineer, agronomist or chemist. No woman took part in parliament or in any more or less important job in the state apparatus. In the secondary schools, girls made up only 2.4 percent of the students. Illiteracy, which kept the overwhelming majority of the population in darkness, weighed even more heavily on the women.

During the National Liberation War, the Party of Labour of Albania attached major importance in its programme to the activation and mobilization of the women. There are many examples in the history of Albania when women have fought, arms in hand, against foreign invaders, but their participation in

the National Liberation War had to become a mass phenomenon and with an entirely new content. The Party called on the women to rise and smash the shackles of fanaticism with their own hands, to line up shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk in the struggle for national liberation and, at the same time, in the struggle for their own emancipation. For the Albanian women, their participation in the armed struggle was a sound guarantee for their complete emancipation in the future. The Party had made it clear in its programme that after the establishment of the people's state power the struggle for the emancipation of the women would continue both in breadth and depth. In this programme, the Albanian women saw the way to their salvation, therefore they rose in whole-hearted struggle. About 6,000 women and girls joined the ranks of the National Liberation Army, and many of them were leaders of partisan detachments. Thousands of others took part in underground work in the cities, in the demonstrations, and clashes with the invaders. Women and girls gave the National Liberation Army massive assistance with food and clothing, by providing shelter and treating the wounded, by transporting arms and ammunition. During the war, the councils of anti-fascist women were set up in villages and cities to conduct organized work with the masses of the women, political and cultural work, courses against illiteracy and so on. The Anti-Fascist Organization of the Albanian Women, which was set up in September 1943, played an outstanding role in the liberation war.

After the establishment of our people's state power, the revolution in the economy was carried out, and this required the conscious efforts of men, women, and the entire people, to fight with self-denial to carry out the collectivization and the socialist industrialization of the country, to safeguard, administer and strengthen the common property at a higher level. Men and women were trained at work, in schools in qualification courses, in political and ideological study groups, to see the emancipation of women, among other problems, as a problem of the socialist revolution.

To this end, special laws were proclaimed, guaranteeing the rights of women, old norms and customs were eliminated, replacing them with new norms and customs, based on raising the respect for and the dignity of the women in our society.

Today, the Albanian women play an important role in the whole life of the country. Let us refer to some figures: at present 47 percent of the working people employed in our Republic are women and girls. In certain sectors, like the light and food-processing industry, education, the health service and trade, this figure rises from 55 to 80 percent. Women make up 33.3 percent of the representatives in the supreme state organ, the People's Assembly, 25% of the members of the Party of Labour of Albania, 26 percent of the members of the Supreme Court, 41.2 percent of the leaders of the organizations of the masses.

The people's state power abolished capitalist exploitation, established a new legislative code, and opened the way to the operation of the objective laws of socialist society. Under the people's state power, the new man has been educated, armed with Marxist-Leninist ideology, with new concepts about work, property, the family, the woman, and so on. The creation of these conditions brought about a situation in which a girl is no longer treated as a slave, in which love must be the basis of every marriage. All roads have been opened to the youth to guide themselves by lofty socialist motives in the creation of the family and not by material interests, careerism and other motives which humiliate the woman.

At the present stage, the problem of the Albanian woman is more of a class struggle in the ideological field. Even under these circumstances, when all these objective conditions have been created, the processes which go on within the family must not be left to spontaneity. Therefore a direct, but tactful struggle is waged to establish socialist relations and standards in the family, such as relations of equality, love, mutual respect and aid. In order to ensure equality between the wife and the other members of the family, the struggle is now being waged in two directions: first, to make family affairs, day-to-day life, children and so on, as widely as possible the concern of the whole society; second, to have every member of the family understand that these things are jobs for which they are all responsible.

Under the conditions of Albania, the participation of women in the entire life of the country has become an objective necessity. The efforts, the physical and mental energies of the women, too, are necessary to promote the unceasing revolution, to strengthen the people's state power and further democratize it through the

line of the masses. The efforts of the women are necessary too, for the strengthening and defence of the homeland against any enemy through the training of the whole people.

The emancipation of women in Albania is not a "feminist movement" as in the capitalist countries, but is the advance of the women to a high level, to full equality with men, the march of women hand-in-hand with their menfolk in harmony of feelings, aims, and pure ideals, the march towards communism.

## VII. **THE RATION BETWEEN LOWER AND HIGHER WAGES**

The Party of Labour of Albania has pursued the line of the gradual narrowing of the differences in the level of income and the living standards between the working class and the cooperative peasantry and the categories within them, between town and countryside; it has always been careful to maintain as correct a ratio as possible between the pay of the cadres and the income of the workers and cooperative members, to avoid flagrant differences in income which give rise to the birth of a privileged stratum and directly endanger the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism. At the same time, the Party has always fought against tendencies towards petty bourgeois equalitarianism in the field of remuneration which is also alien and harmful to socialism.

In accordance with this revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist line, the wage system of the workers and the employees and the system of the remuneration for work for cooperative members have been set up and systematically improved always based on the socialist law of distribution according to work. The implementation of this system in practice has made it possible for the differences between lower and higher wages, between the income of the employees and the workers and cooperative members to be narrowed and to have more correct proportions.

On this question the Party of Labour of Albania has always proceeded from the teachings of Lenin who stressed that "**The corruptive influence of high wages is indisputable both on the Soviet State Power as well as on the masses of the workers . . . The principle of the Paris Commune and every proletarian State Power demand that the wage of an employee be no higher than the wage of a good worker, they demand that career seeking be fought against with actions and not with words.**"

In the implementation of this great teaching of V.I. Lenin, in accordance with the concrete conditions of the development of and the socialist construction in Albania, the Party of Labour of Albania step by step has continually taken measures to narrow the ratio between the medium wage of the workers and the higher wages of the employees. Nine years ago on the 29th of April, 1967 in the Declaration of the Central Committee of the Party and the government it was stressed that the establishment of correct proportions between the wages of the workers and the employees and between the wages of categories of employees is a measure of principled importance which blocks the road to bourgeois degeneration, career seeking and many other evils. Following the Declaration, the differences between lower and higher wages in Albania reached the ratio of 1 to 2.5. Now following the latest decision, this ratio is narrowed even further. Today in Albania the ratio between the average wages of workers and the salary of the director of the same enterprise is 1:1.7; that between the average wages of the workers in general and the salary of the director in the Ministry is about 1:2; that between the lowest and highest ages of the workers within the same branch is about 1:1.5-1.65 etc. These ratios are set by law.

This is a concrete and unprecedented implementation of the Marxist-Leninist thesis, a great reality of the proletarian justice in Socialist Albania, where a post is not a privilege and where cadres are integrated with the masses. "**Living standards**", Comrade Enver Hoxha stresses, "**should not be allowed to rise with big differences, officials should not be allowed to live far better than the workers and the peasants to live at lower standards than their allies in the city. Our Party is fighting and will always fight to unceasingly improve the life of the people but the life of everybody, proceeding from the correct principle of not having equality in wages but neither privilege for anybody**

**and differences of wages between the workers must constantly narrow their margin."**

The lowering of higher wages, together with the measures to lift over and above the basic wage of the working people of literature and art, education and science, better harmonizing the material stimuli with the moral stimuli is an expression of the class treatment of the problem of wages. This has the aim of further revolutionizing, from the material standpoint as well, the relations between cadres and the masses, and also the relations in the very fold of the cadres, a vital premise to protect people, especially the cadres, from alien influences and degeneration. Experience shows that bureaucratism is nourished by higher wages. Bureaucratic elements always lean towards the deepening of the ratio in wages through many ways and means. The working class, under the leadership of its Party, has fought and is fighting against these tendencies, maintaining a clear-cut revolutionary class stand. Therefore the measures contained in the decision of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania and of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania towards lowering higher wages have a profound ideo-political and social content, they have their national value, but they are also an important contribution to the treasury of Marxism-Leninism. They express the desire and interests of the entire Party and people, of the working class, the cooperative peasantry and the people's intelligentsia; therefore they have met with complete approval everywhere, and have been received with enthusiasm and high mobilization towards socialist construction and the defence of the homeland.

## **VIII. CADRES ENGAGE IN PRODUCTION WORK**

Wherever you go in Albania, in town or countryside, you are liable to come across leading cadres of all levels, workers of the administration, people of intellectual pursuits who are working

directly in production, shoulder to shoulder with the workers and peasants. The school youth works with enthusiasm in building railroads and opening mountain highways.

It is a principle in the social life of socialist Albania that, with the exception of the elderly or those whose health or physical condition does not permit it, all the cadres of administration of the state, Party or economic apparatus and organs, and social organizations, cadres of the army, the intelligentsia, state enterprises and agricultural cooperatives take part regularly for definite periods in work directly in production. In addition to classroom lessons, physical and military training, direct participation in production work has been introduced as an essential component in our school curriculum.

The participation of leading cadres and all the people of mental work directly in work in production is an aspect of our social life of vital importance to the cause of socialism and firmly based on principle. With what is this connected?

Above all, it has to do with the establishment, maintenance and perfecting of genuinely socialist relations in society. In order to establish such relations it is not enough just to establish socialist ownership over the means of production. It is also essential to establish correct relations between the leading cadres and the broad masses of working people in town and countryside. This requires that on the one hand the cadres, as representatives of the dictatorship of the proletariat, must manage, lead and supervise; while on the other hand, they must consider themselves servants of the people, closely linked with the masses and integrate themselves with them, must learn from and render account to the masses and to be constantly under their effective control. This means that centralism must be correctly combined with socialist democracy.

But in socialism there exists the danger that the leading cadres may become bureaucratic, detach themselves from the masses and become opposed to them, may turn from servants of the people into rulers over them, may degenerate and thus create a new anti-socialist caste or class — a thing which leads to the liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the restoration of capitalism. The existence of such a danger has already been confirmed by historical experience. Failure to take it into account is fraught with fatal consequences for the future of

socialism. However, this is by no means inevitable and can be avoided if a correct Marxist-Leninist stand is maintained and effective measures are taken to prevent it from turning into reality. Among the measures which the Party of Labour of Albania has taken to ward off this danger, of great importance are the circulation of cadres from leading posts to the base, and from the administration to production and vice versa, the bringing into the leading organs of more and more persons, who work in production, especially from the ranks of the working class; the reduction of higher salaries and putting the standard of living of the cadres in correct proportion to that of the masses, the further deepening of the line of the masses in appointing cadres, intensification of the Marxist-Leninist ideo-political education of the cadres and fighting against manifestations of technocracy, etc. The direct participation of our leading cadres in production is one of the most important steps taken in this direction. The aim of it is the revolutionary education of the cadres with correct concepts about work and the working people, to protect the cadres from bourgeois and bureaucratic degeneration, to link them closely with the people and their lives. Comrade Enver Hoxha says: "The cadres must get oil on their hands and mud on their boots, so that they see the problems, the needs, the work, not just from above, but from down below, because this is how we wipe out bureaucracy, symptoms of conceit and arrogance, the diseases of commandism and cronyism among the people who run things, because these problems arise most among those who, vested with power, think that it is they alone who create everything, that the work wouldn't go on without them."

The participation of the leading cadres and the intellectuals in productive labour is a matter of great principle also because it leads to the further strengthening of the moral-political unity of the people in the struggle for the cause of the construction of socialism, serves to overcome the separation of theory from practice which, as Lenin points out, is one of the greatest evils and misfortunes inherited from the old capitalist society. It constitutes one of the concrete and effective ways of gradually narrowing the essential distinctions between physical and mental work.

## IX. CULTURE AND EDUCATION

### THE LANGUAGE

A glance over the history of the Albanian language, no matter how hurried and brief, cannot fail to bring out two contradictory aspects: on one hand, a language documented in writing very late (the first book in Albanian is that by Gjon Buzuku in 1555) and on the other, an ancient people autochthonous in the Balkans since the mists of pre-history.

How is this to be explained?

Historically it is a well-known fact the Albanians and the Greeks were the earliest inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Our people have been living in these parts for well over three thousand years. From one generation to another they have spoken their own language which, with the changes it has undergone in time, is spoken today by the Albanians.

Hence, here we have a language so ancient as a spoken language and so recent as a written language. The five hundred-year period of the written Albanian language should be viewed only as a small part of the history of the Albanian language, as the most recent stage of its historical development.

Albanian is a member of the Indo-European languages.

The first to prove scientifically that Albanian is a member of the family of Indo-European languages was the German scholar Franz Bopp. Other scholars before him like Xylander, Rasmus Rask, Schleicher and others had made separate observations regarding the relationship of Albanian to the other Indo-European languages, but Bopp dedicated a complete monograph, entitled *On Albanian in Connection With its Affinities*, published in 1854, to this problem. As far back as 1843 Bopp had delivered a dissertation at the Berlin Academy on the numerals and pronouns of the Albanian language claiming with certainty that it belonged to the family of Indo-European languages. But in 1854 he examined a broader range of material.

He made a thorough scientific analysis of the Albanian language and arrived at the conclusion that it belonged, incontestably, to the family of Indo-European languages.

As the Albanian Prof. Eqrem Çabej has pointed out, when speaking of the Indo-European character of the Albanian language, one should bear in mind that not all its linguistic wealth comes from the ancient Indo-European heritage. With the passage of time Albanian, like any other language, has lost a lot from its autochthonous heritage, due to its continuous contact with the languages of other peoples; on the other hand, it has been enriched with new words, expressions and constructions from its own source and has given to and received from the other language with which it has been in contact.

The Albanian words having corresponding forms in the other Indo-European languages are ordinary words of day to day use which serve as a basis on which others are built. Here are a few Albanian examples: **ujk**, **ulk** sanskrit **vrksh**, Latin **lupus**, Greek **Lykos**, Russian **volk**; Albania **dité**, Sanskrit **dinam**; Lithuanian **diens**, Latin **dies**, Russian **den**; Albanian **mi**, Sanskrit **muh**, Armenian **mukn**, Greek **mys**, Latin **mus**.

Bopp's assertion that Albanian has no successional connection with the other sister languages of our continent remains correct. The connections it has with other languages are not filial but of another character.

In his article "The Place of Albanian Within the Circle of Indo-European Languages", the well-known Albanologist, Gustav Mayer, accurately defined the position of Albanian in this linguistic family. He places Albanian close to the eastern and northern Indo-European languages. When we say that the Albanian pertains to this or that group of languages, we have in mind that in certain features it has followed the same course of development with them in relation to the Indo-European structure. For instance, in northern Indo-European languages the short Indo-European "o", has changed to "a", while in the southern ones it is kept as "o". On this point Albanian joins with the first group. Thus we have Albanian **natë**, German **nacht**, Lithuanian **naktis**, while Latin **nox**, **noctis**. The relations of Albanian with these languages have been studied more concretely by other scholars among whom we should mention Holger Petersen and Nobert Jokl, who with their fruitful studies

have rendered a valuable contribution to Albanological science.

Following the triumph of the people's revolution, very favourable conditions were created in Albania for the development of the science of Albanian linguistics, so that Albania has become the epicenter of studies in this field. Today, tens of Albanian scholars are engaged in studying the problems of the history of the Albanian language. Through many works illuminating various aspects of the historical development of the Albanian language, they are rendering a valuable contribution in this field. The studies by Prof. Eqrem Çabej deserve special mention.

Among other things, new facts and proofs have been brought forth on the Indo-European nature of the Albanian language. A more profound argumentation has been provided for the conclusions reached and perceptible results have been achieved in defining the various laws that have acted in the evolution of the phonetic and morphological structure of the Albanian language in relation to the structure of the other Indo-European languages. Further studies have been conducted on its relations with the other Indo-European languages, on the problems connected with the pre-Balkan cradle of the Albanians, with the origin of the Albanian language, with the country of its formation, with the autochtony of the Albanians and so on.

In connection with the origin of the Albanian language, as is known, three different theses have long been advanced, on its Illyrian origin, its Thracian origin or its Illyro-Thracian origin. The theses on the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language is gaining ground thanks to the studies of the Albanian linguists coupled with the results of our archaeology in the material field. More and more convincing proofs are being advanced in favour of this thesis. The fact that the present Albanians dwell where the Illyrian tribes used to dwell, and that the history of our people records no later immigrations into these regions, support the thesis that the Albanians are the descendants of the Illyrians and the Albanian is the offspring of the Illyrian language. On the other hand, those few linguistic elements which modern science has at its disposal about the Illyrian language find their explanation through the Albanian. The Albanian historical toponymy is of special interest in throwing light on such an important problem of the history of our people. The comparison

between the ancient forms of place names and the present forms show that the latter are the uninterrupted continuity of the former in line with the historical phonetics of the Albanian language. This proves that the Albanians are natives of their present territories, at least since the Greco-Roman period. And when it is known with certainty that Illyrian tribes inhabited the Albanian territory, this shows that the Albanians are the offspring of the Illyrians and that the Albanian is the continuity of the Illyrian language.

It can be said that during these thirty-two years of our people's state power, studies in the field of the history of the Albanian language have had two main objectives, namely, first to sum up in a creative way what had been achieved by the science of linguistics before liberation from the middle of the 19th century when F. Bopp finally established that the Albanian language is part of the family of "Indo-European languages", second, to make a more thorough examination and analysis of many problems dealt with earlier, as well as to raise and solve a series of other problems in this field.

Testimony to our successes in attaining these objectives in an unbiased way are the summaries in the form of monographs and university texts like *Introduction to the History of the Albanian Language* and the *Historical Phonetics of the Albanian Language* by Prof. E. Çabej and *The Historical Morphology of the Albanian Language* by Prof. M. Domi. Of special value in this field are the etymological studies in the field of the Albanian language, the fruit of many years' efforts by Prof. E. Çabej, which constitute a major contribution of Albanian linguistics to the historical study of the Albanian language.

Special care has been devoted to the study of the Albanian language after the 16th century, with the scholars concentrating their efforts on discovering the special phonetic and morphologic features of the language of our authors of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

While giving priority to the study of the internal history of the Albanian language, our linguistics during the years after liberation has not overlooked the study of its external history. It was precisely Albanian linguistics that cleared up and dealt more extensively with the problem of the origin of the Albanian language and the cradle of the Albanian in the Balkans, which

are important, not only to the history of the Albanian language, but also to the history of the Albanian people and the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula. A complete synthesis of the studies in this field was made at the Convention of Illyrian Studies (Tirana 1972) through the report on *The Problem of the Place of the Formation of the Albanian Language* in which in a very compelling and convincing way it was shown that the Albanians are a people autochthonous on their present territory. In throwing light on such problems, which are as important as they are complicated, Albanian linguistics has aimed to advance with cautious steps and be as objective as possible. It has made a valuable contribution to refuting the views of a certain foreign linguistics expert (G. Weigand) who considered that the Albanians had come from eastern to western regions, where they live today. Bringing forward a series of new arguments from the field of toponomy and naval lexicon of the Albanian language and from the field of its reciprocal relations with ancient Greek and Latin, Albanian linguistics shows that the thesis of Weigand and other of a similar type held by foreign scholars are now obsolete and untenable.

Of special significance in this direction are the articles and studies on the contribution of the Albanian language to the formation of the affinity of the Balkan languages and on the role of Albanian as a contributor to the neighbouring languages.

Another occasion to add contributions in this field was the Conference of Ethnographic Studies (Tirana, June 28 to 29, 1976) at which, in addition to many contributions on the various aspects of the material and social culture of the Albanian people, three papers from the field of linguistics were read, which examined problems mainly of the history of the Albanian language viewed from an ethnolinguistic angle.

The results of the work in the field of studies on the history of the Albanian language make up only one part of the successes attained by Albanian linguistics in the field of Albanological research.

Today, the Albanian language is spoken not only in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania but also beyond its borders. It is spoken by nearly one and a half million Albanians in Yugoslavia and Greece in the parts immediately over the borders. Albanian is spoken also in distant settlements of

Albanians who, in various periods, have emigrated from Albania, the majority of them several centuries ago, some of them during the past century and the beginning of our century.

In Yugoslavia, spoken Albanian extends over a large territory of northwestern Macedonia and in the district of Kosova, in the regions of Peshtar, Preshova and Bujanovich, as well as in Montenegro, in the regions of Plava, Gucia, Treshi, Gruda; in the mountain region of Kraja, in Ulqin and its environs. In Greece, the Albanian language is spoken in the Çamëria district, the southern border of which extends to the Bay of Preveza. It must be said that the Albanian spoken in both Yugoslavia and Greece cannot be separated from the spoken Albanian of the present day Albania because they have not been isolated during their development.

The Albanian language has been maintained and continues to be spoken and, partly written, in old settlements in Greece, Italy and elsewhere. On the islands of Hydra, Poro, Specia, Salamina and the districts of Athens, Euboea, the Peloponesus and elsewhere, spoken Albanian dates back to the 14th century. Somewhat later is that of the Arbëreshi who have settled mainly in the districts of Calabria and Sicily. Most of these settlements date back to the 15th and 16th centuries.

The most recent are the spoken Albanian of the Albanians in Dalmatia (Arbanas near Zara) formed towards the beginning of the 18th century, the spoken Albanian of Madrica in Bulgaria and the spoken Albanian of the Albanian settlers in the Ukraine, in the districts of Melitopol and of Odessa, which were formed at the beginning and in the middle of the 19th century.

Having been detached for a long time from their motherland, the spoken Albanian of these settlements has been developed and influenced by a foreign environment but most forms of it, especially that of the Arbëreshi in Italy, have been very well preserved and on the basis of this language has been built an artistic literature represented by well-known poets and writers like Jeronim de Rada, A. Santori, G. Dara, Z. Serembe, V. Stratigoni, V. Dorsa and many others.

In our days a whole generation of Arbëreshi like F. Solano, G. Fareco, U. Giordano, J. Farrari, V. Salvaggi and others are following the path of this pleiad of enlightened Arbëreshi, striving to preserve the language and folklore of the Arbëreshi

and prevent its being lost.

Outside the homeland the Albanian language is spoken also by the Albanian emigrants of the past century and the beginning of this one to Egypt, the USA, Argentina, Australia, Turkey, Rumania, etc.

### ALBANIAN LITERATURE

Albanian literature is not among the newest in Europe as is usually claimed, because its first book (Gjon Buzuku: *Masses*) belongs to the year 1555, and the earliest written document which has reached us dates back to 1462. A document of the year 1332 speaks of the existence at that time of Albanian books. At the end of the 16th century, the Arbëresh in Italy, driven from Albania a century earlier, were still conducting their religious services in the Albanian language, while the great Albanian humanist, Marin Barleti, who wrote the history of Skanderbeg, mentions chronicles in the popular language in 1504. However the ravages of time have destroyed all these. A more or less extensive literary activity re-emerged after the Ottoman onslaughts of the 14th and 15th centuries with authors like Pjetër Budi, Frano Bardhi, Pjetër Bogdani (17th century) and others. Their works had a religious and didactic character, with religious books and a few poems, dictionaries (the first published in 1635), grammar books (the first published in 1716), theological tracts etc. At the start of the 18th century, after the mass conversion to the Islamic religion took place in the country, a whole literary trend began under the influence of oriental literature, with a considerable number of authors and works in a number of genres, and this trend lasted for about two centuries. It included poets in whose works there is an obvious stress on social protest (Hasan Zyko Kamberi, late 18th century) and anti-feudalism (Zenel Bastari, mid-19th century), who were the precursors of the bourgeois critical realism which developed in Albania during the first 40 years of our century.

An Albanian literature of high artistic qualities began with Albanian romanticism, a contemporary of the European romanticism of the 19th century. Its earliest outstanding work was the poem *Milosao's Songs* (1836) by Jeronim de Rada (1815-1903) the author of a number of poetic works, such as *Serafina Topia* (1839), *The Unfortunate Skanderbeg* (1872-84) etc., and

an outstanding publicist and patriot. But the writer who dominated Albanian literature in the 19th century was Naim Frashëri (1846-1900), a lyric poet (*Flocks and Farming*, a pastoral poem — 1886, *Summer Flowers*, a collection of philosophic and patriotic poems — 1890) and epic poet (*The Hystory of Skanderbeg* — 1898, his masterpiece) and other important works. In Naim Frashëri, the Albanian language found a fiery poet who also gave a fresh impetus to Albanian philosophic thought by waging a special struggle against mediaeval theological thought and by upholding and courageously spreading some of the most outstanding achievements of science, such as Darwinism. He remains the most beloved and most popular poet of our past.

Among the other authors of the time, let us mention Andon Zako Çajupi, lyricist, satirist as well as a writer of fables, with his collection of poems *Father Tomorri* (1902) from which our critical realism begins, the lyricists Andrea Mjeda, Asdren, Zef Serembe, Gavril Dara Jr., the author of a very well-known epic-lyric poem *Bala's Last Lay*, the revolutionary novelist Mihal Grameno, and others.

The favoured themes of this literature were those of the wars against the Ottoman invaders and especially during the time of Skanderbeg (15th century), the call for the liberation of the country, denunciation of feudalism and so on. It was a literature closely linked with the national movement and with the ideas of illuminism, a literature which led that movement in struggle against the occupiers, who had banned the writing of the Albanian language, the opening of Albanian schools and the development of culture, which took the name of the Albanian Renaissance. During this time, from the middle of the last century, the Albanian press came into being, and later, Albanian cultural societies were formed and managed to open a few schools teaching in the Albanian language. As a matter of fact the Albanian language was known as an instructional language as far back as the 17th century, of course for religious education.

The 19th century is also regarded as the century of the beginnings of Albanian linguistic science, with such authorities on Albanian linguistics as Dhimitër Kamarda and Kostandin Kristoforidhi (the author of a famous dictionary) with so famous an encyclopedist and thinker as Sami Frashëri, Naim's brother,

who was also the principal ideologist of the Albanian national movement. His work *Albanian What It Was, What It is and What It Will Be* (1899) rightly called the *Manifesto* of the National Renaissance, is one of the most valuable works of political and social prose in the Albanian language.

Following the proclamation of Independence (1912) and under the continuous threat of the partitioning of Albania or a new occupation (this was achieved by Italian fascism in 1939), Albanian literature developed along the lines of the literature of the Albanian Renaissance, as a patriotic literature with an ever stronger anti-feudal and revolutionary character. The author who dominated that period, Fan S. Noli (1882-1965), leader of the 1924 revolution, was one of the most outstanding poets (*Album*), a publicist, aesthete, a translator who translated works by Shakespeare, Cervantes, Ibsen etc.; an historian (his masterpiece, *The History of Skanderbeg*, was first published in 1921 and then published in revised form in 1949) and a musical critic (renowned for his study *Beethoven and the French Revolution* which aroused the admiration of Bernard Shaw, Thomas Mann, Sibelius, etc.) After Kristoforidhi, Naim and Sami Frashëri before the war, he made the most substantial contribution to literary Albanian, which achieved its complete unification during the years of socialist development in Albania. A well-known lyricist of the time was Lasgush Poradeci, Migjeni (1911-1938) whose anthology *Free Verses* (1935) and his short stories, marked the culmination of the development of Albanian critical realism with strong accents on social revolt, which, through a rare talent, heralded the Albanian literature of socialist realism. Among the prose writers of the time were the novelists, Fojion Postoli and Hami Stërmilli. Stërmilli left a novel on the very difficult situation of the Albanian women during the time of feudal and bourgeois domination. A participant in the National Liberation War, he also left a *Diary* from the war which is outstanding for its impressions from the life of the people who had hurled themselves into the general armed uprising.

A new epoch in the development of Albanian literature begins with the outbreak of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War of the Albanian people and with the historic triumph of the people's revolution (1944), which brought the country its

national freedom, overthrew the old social order, and paved the way to processes of the construction of socialist society and socialist culture.

The revolutionary literature of the war years, which came into being in the clandestine communist press, was the expression of the anti-fascist resistance of the Albanian people, an artistic portrayal of the patriotic spirit of the masses of the people and of their aspirations to a new world. These motifs were expressed mainly in the war poetry, in the patriotic lyric, which was developed by such authors as the martyr poet Memo Meto, poets Kolë Jakova, Lyazar Siliqi, Aleks Çaci and the satirist Shefqet Musaraj, the author of the poem *Epic of the Balli Kombëtar* (1944), one of the classic examples of Albanian satirical poetry and the most distinguished work of the revolutionary literature of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War.

The revolutionary literature of the anti-fascist resistance was quickly changed, after the triumph of the people's revolution into a literature of the new type, pervaded by socialist ideals and the spirit of communist partisanship. It developed the best traditions of former Albanian literature, its pathos of city life and popular, democratic spirit, its realism and close connection with the poetic tradition of the people's oral literature. Born on the basis of new ideas, on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist materialist world outlook, which throws light on the laws and processes of development of society, the new literature adopted the method of socialist realism, which opened previously unknown horizons to its enrichment and flowering. The literature of the socialist epoch in Albania constitutes the highest stage of artistic development in Albanian society. This has found expression in the richness of content and motifs, in the flowering of all genres, in the variety of styles and in the high level of artistic expression. The ideas of the revolution and progress, the aspirations of the masses of the people, liberated once and for all from any sort of material and spiritual bondage, form the true content of present day Albanian literature. The object of its inspiration is the struggle of the masses for the thorough transformation of their life and themselves, for the construction of the new society, and the new man who has also become the central hero of this literature. Centering its attention on the future of the people and the revolution, the new literature portrays the masses not as victims

of history but as a vigorous and active force, conscious of their historic mission of the construction of a new world, a new humane society, a new man freed from the shackles of the old world. The historical optimism and confidence in the brilliant communist future which fills the spiritual life of socialist society has been turned into an inherent element of the literature which is being developed in Albania today. One of the most active genres in present day Albanian literature is poetry, which is taken up by a number of poets of outstanding artistic individuality among whom are Dritero Agolli, Ismail Kadare, Lazar Siliqi and Fatos Arapi. They devote their efforts mainly to the lyric-epic poem, in which the motifs of building the new life, of freeing man from the old reactionary psychology and ideology, the ideas of the historic vitality of the Albanian people and the theme of their resistance, and the historic destiny of the nation and revolution, cast in a vivid metaphoric language and powerful poetic symbolism, have revitalized this genre of poetry and have opened wide vistas for its rapid development. The lyric-epic poem in the present Albanian poetry is developed as a synthesis of lyrical meditations and timeless experiences in an epic spirit. It is characterized by the polyphony, richness of motifs and variety of tones of the poetic narration. In the artistic structure of this kind, which resembles a poetic mosaic, the laws of the association of ideas act to link the times, ideas, and the various motifs, giving the poem artistic coherence and internal cohesion.

The most outstanding works of this kind are *Prishtina* (1949) by Lazar Siliqi, *Of What Are These Mountains Thinking?* (1964) by I. Kadare, *Devoll, Devoll* (1964) by D. Agolli, *Bloody Alarms!* (1966) by F. Arapi and others.

The epic narrative poem, which is developed on the basis of the heroic folk epic, deals mainly with the theme of the historic past of the Albanian people, of their wars and battles for freedom, and is represented by such works as *The Heroes of Vigu* (1953) by K. Jakova.

Of the shorter poems, the development of lyrics of city and social life, lyrics of reflection and the landscape, is very extensive.

The best indication of the development of Albanian literature after the war, as well as of the artistic level which the present Albanian literature has reached, is prose in its two most widely used forms, the short story, and especially the novel. Today the

novel has emerged as the leading form and has met with world recognition through Ismail Kadare's *The General of the Dead Army* (1964) and *Chronicle in Stone* (1971). The present Albanian novel is a realist novel which portrays the fate of man closely connected with the circumstances of the social environment, and the existing material and spiritual relations, but also under the light of the changes they will undergo in the days to come. The principal themes it treats are from the historical past, reflected in *They Were Not Alone* (1952) by S. Sapsse, *The Castle* (1970) by I. Kadare, *The Dead River* (1965) by J. Xoxe, the theme of the people's revolution and of the anti-fascist resistance reflected in *Before the Dawn* (1965) by Sh. Musaraj, *The Bronze Bust* (1970) by D. Agolli, as well as the theme of the building of the new life reflected in *The Swamp* (1959) by Fatmir Gjata, *Again on his Feet* (1970) by D. Xhuvani, and others. The works which reflect the epoch of the Anti-Fascist War tend towards the epic novel, which takes up life in proportions of epic breadth with a few lines on the subject. Along with them is the novel with a more concentrated subject, as well as the novel without a subject in the traditional sense of that word. This kind of novel is characterized, not by the movement of action but by the movement of the idea, which is revealed through an original composition, through the shifting of events, which creates the impression of the action and dictates breaking the bounds of time and mixing up periods.

In the field of narratives and short stories, the writers Dhimitër Shuteriqi, Anastas Kondo, Teodor Laço, and others are outstanding. In the new Albanian literature, drama inherited a poor tradition from the past, but, through efforts of the whole of literature, to reflect the major conflicts of the time, the drama of the old world, which was crushed and the stern struggle which gave birth to the new life, this genre quickly set out on the road of realism and really began to flower, fostering the national theatre, which came into being in Albania after liberation. The dramas *Our Land* (1954) by K. Jakova, *The Highland Girl* (1971) by Loni Papa, or the comedy *The Carnivals of Korça* (1961) by Spiro Çomora, etc., are constantly in the active repertory of the Albanian theatre. Keeping pace with the development of literature are aesthetic thought and literary criticism, which base their analysis of artistic phenomena on Marxist-Leninist

methodology. Outstanding in this field are Alfred Uçi with his work, *Aesthetics, Life and Art* (1970), Dalan Shaplo with collection of criticisms, *Literary Manifestations and Works* (1974), Koço Bihiku with his collections of studies, *Literary Problems* (1975), Razi Brahimi with his essay, *Speaking of Poetry* (1972), etc.

The new Albanian literature is ceaselessly flowering and developing. It is rising on the basis of the finest traditions of the artistic culture of the Albanian people, utilizing the progressive experience of world art and literature. The phenomena of the crisis, which decadent art is experiencing today, are alien to it, and all roads are blocked to the influence of this art through a ceaseless struggle for a realist humane art, which sings praises to the strength of the free man and which is permeated by the finest ideals of mankind, by the ideals of social progress and building communist society. As an artistic expression of Albanian life, present day Albanian literature has a marked national character and a profoundly socialist content. The development of it testifies to the vitality of socialist realism as a new artistic method which gives wide possibilities for the all-round reflection of life and for the flowering of creative artistic styles and individuality.

## FOLKLORE

Albania has a rich beautiful heritage of folklore. In the wealth and diversity of Albanian folklore, the feelings and vitality of its people are reflected. In the first place the genius of the people themselves elaborated through the experience of so many generations contributed to this national treasure store. At the same time the social conditions exerted their influence, together with the historical, geographical and other circumstances, because various tides have ebbed and flowed through the centuries over this land situated at the crossroads between East and West, leaving their traces in its folklore.

**Musical folklore:** "Variegated Songs" — this is what the people call songs of the lyric genre. This description is a very good expression of the great diversity of this genre in Albanian folklore. All sorts of songs of various forms, content and themes have always accompanied the Albanian people at the most important moments of their lives, at work or at rest in war or in peace, in joy or in sorrow. Through them the people have

expressed their feelings and thoughts, their wishes and dreams and have given vent to the anger in their hearts and the fire in their souls. All kinds of interesting motifs can be found in the various categories of folksongs, ranging from lullabies with which Albanian mothers rock their babies to sleep in their cradles, the nursery songs and rhymes, which bring the pleasant aroma of childhood; from gentle lovesongs, full of emotion, to humorous and satirical songs, which display the keen eye of the people to observe details and pillory various shortcomings; from wedding songs to the toasts raised in drinking bouts; from elegies to funeral lamentation. Also of interest are the motifs of certain work songs of shepherds, farmers, artisans, and others which are replete with ancient elements both in the substance of the verses as well as in the archaic manners of musical composition. Many ancient relics are to be found especially in the category of ritual songs for yearly celebrations. From this standpoint Albanian folklore can be compared to a rich mine, in which many songs and dances of ancient times, which bring us the echo of the celebrations of our pagan forefathers are preserved. These songs, handed down from one generation to another, seem to be rooted deep in the hearts of our people, although the new conditions of life are making an impact even in this category of songs, putting aside some obsolete manifestations and, vice-versa, developing certain new themes further. Like the genre of lyric songs, the songs of the epic genre are rich in motifs, subject matter and form. Certain popular ballads and "Songs of the Knights" from the most important cycle of the legendary epic, captivate one with the fantasy of their content and their poetic expression. Besides being the poetic-musical trend of the people, they are, at the same time, a reflection of their world outlook, in which their optimism coupled with certain social manifestations — generosity, hospitality, manliness, together with many other noble virtues stand out.

With regard to the historical epic, it can be said that every important event that leaves its mark is commemorated by the Albanian people through songs. Listing epic songs of this kind in their chronological order, that is, beginning with the ballads of the period prior to the Turkish occupation in the 15th century, going on to the epic songs during the time of the Turkish occupation, which tell of the struggle for freedom, for secession

from the Turkish Empire, of people's uprisings or express their social protest against oppression and exploitation (the songs of emigrants abroad) or commemorate the mighty efforts of the patriots of our National Renaissance for national independence, we arrive at the songs of the National Liberation War. All these epic songs give us valuable information about the historic circumstances that the Albanian people perpetuate. They testify to the heroic resistance of the people, who fought for centuries on end for their freedom and independence. Finally, the songs of the period of socialist construction represent the further development of the historical epic, either in the ideological theme or their content or in their new elements of artistic expression.

To this day, from the ranks of the Albanian people there continue to emerge rhapsodists who, along with the old ballads, know how to sing to the events of the day, responding to current events as they occur.

The various genres of folksongs, the ancient heritage of many motifs, their constant elaboration, together with the new productions and a number of various factors, have enriched Albanian folk music with an extraordinary variety of artistic expressions. This music is composed in all kinds of sequences of simple, compound, mixed and irregular rhythmic measures (that is,  $2/2$ ,  $2/4$ ,  $2/8$ ,  $3/2$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $3/8$ ,  $4/2$ ,  $4/4$ ,  $4/8$ ) or compound (that is,  $6/2$ ,  $6/4$ ,  $6/8$ ,  $9/2$ ,  $9/4$ ,  $9/8$ ,  $12/2$ ,  $12/4$ ,  $12/8$ ) or mixed (that is  $5/4$ ,  $5/8$ ,  $7/4$ ,  $7/8$ ,  $8/4$ ,  $8/8$ ,  $\frac{4+5}{8}$ ,  $\frac{10}{8}$ ) reaching higher measures up to 25. In addition to these, we have **irregular** measures and 8

"free" rhythms (*ad libitum*) which are not divided into definite bars. Of special interest is the polyphonic combination of voices in characteristic parts. From this standpoint, Albanian folk music is divided into two main dialects which conform to the two language dialects: in regions north of the Shkumbini river we have homophonic (in unison) and heterophonic music while on the other side of this river we have polyphonic music, both vocal and instrumental. The style of this polyphony varies according to the district, to the number of parts (two, three and four), to the age group and the sex of the singers, and so on. The polyphonic combination of voices in songs sung by choral groups follows

certain original rules set by local tradition. The study of this popular polyphony is of importance to musicology from many aspects.

In every village and city block, from time to time one hears the sounds of musical instruments without which no wedding parties nor popular celebrations take place. The various instruments used by the people give our folk music all kinds of tonal shades. From the simplest instruments used by children to those used by adults to stress the rhythm, we have a wide range of tone and timbre. There are five folk instruments from the drum family, including the tambourine, but it is in wind instruments that the widest range occurs from para-musical instruments like gourds and conche shells and horns, to various kinds of flute and pipe including the bagpipe. There are also many stringed instruments played both by plucking and with a bow. But it must be said that pride of place in our musical expression belongs to the human voice. Many interesting observations can be made about characteristic methods of drawing the voice from the throat like some folk singers from the southwestern part of Albania (a kind of yodel, which suddenly changes from the deep register to falsetto) or of the outburst of powerful voices as in some songs sung by the northern mountaineers.

The inclination, creative ability, temperament, endurance, optimism together with many aspects of life, are reflected also in our **folk dances**, which are, without doubt, among the most beautiful and the most interesting expressions of Albanian folklore. Their beauty has attracted the admiration of a number of foreign writers and artists, among whom it suffices to mention Lord Byron's picturesque description of Albanian dances in his work *Childe Harold*.

Albanian folk dances vary more or less according to districts, the sex and age of the participants, their forms and content, etc. Every district, and indeed nearly every village, has its own characteristic dances. The distinctive features of every district conform to the dialectical and ethnographic branches with which a number of variants are linked. But in spite of the great variation of the dances of different districts they also contain common elements emanating from the unity of the Albanian tradition. In the past the women and men of certain districts used to dance separately, while mixed dances were rare even within the one

clan. As regards distinctions according to generation there are old men's and young men's dances, old women's and young brides' dances; and then there are also children's dances.

Viewed from the number of participants, there are **solo** dances, which are danced in northern Albania, and in Kosova, while in southern Albania, where polyphonic music prevails, there are no solo dances.

**Duo** dances are danced in different ways throughout Albania, while in south Albania they exist only as an integral part of collective dances.

As a rule **trio** dances are danced by two women and a man or, vice-versa, by two men and a woman. Most of them are of a dramatic character.

Collective dances have more than four participants. These, too, differ both from the standpoint of form and content. The commonest form is a straight chain as, for instance, the humorous dances of the **caps** or **coffee cups**, which are danced by the peasants of northern and northeastern Albania. There are also dances in **ranks**, which interchange with twists and winding movements as, for instance, those danced by the Albanian settlers in Italy, in which all kinds of figures are formed. In addition, there are also dances of two facing rows, which are accompanied by songs. The commonest form is the circular dance which has spread all over Albania, as well as among the Albanians beyond its borders. The circle may be an open one, like an arch, horseshoe, spiral and so on, or a closed one of big or small diametre, according to the number of participants. The circular dances of southern Albania have two leaders as required by the parts in polyphonic songs.

It is difficult to describe in words the structure of Albanian folk dances with their movements, steps and figures accompanied by gestures and mimicry in facial expression. In general, the folk dancers dance not only with their feet, but with the whole of their bodies, putting heart and soul into singing about their lives. Nor are acrobatic elements lacking as for instance in the so-called "living tower", which is performed by a circle of dancers linked shoulder to shoulder, on which stands another circle of dancers.

The Albanian folk dances are not abstract performances but they express some lyric, epic, or dramatic content through plastic

movements, mimicry, song and so on. Of interest from many points of view are the warlike dances which reflect with strong character and manliness the epic spirit moulded in the long resistance against every foreign occupation. Also interesting are certain dances connected with ancient habits and customs. The most complete category of dances is that represented by those which are danced to vocal music provided by the dancers themselves. In this category, poetry, music and dancing are all blended into a single synthesis. We have a very interesting phenomenon in the **dances of the meadow** performed by the Highlanders of northern Albania in silence, without musical accompaniment, but according to the rhythm which stems from the bodies of the dancers themselves.

The diversity of rhythm and metre of our folk music enables the dancers to express all their spiritual ardour through all kinds of dynamic elements.

The **National Costumes** in general emphasize or, better, display the harmony of plastic movements. When one watches the Albanian folk dances in their own environment with those picturesque costumes accompanied by their characteristic music, one cannot fail to be deeply impressed. All that diversity of forms and motifs handed down from one generation to another, with those myriads of movements, steps and figures of great expressive power, are convincing evidence of the creative fantasy, mastery, artistic taste and rich spiritual world of this people.

An ever lively and interesting branch of Albanian folklore is that of dramatic performances ranging from the simplest to the more complicated forms. There are certain categories of popular performances with or without a given fable, such as humorous farces, stories dramatized in monologues or dialogues, pantomimes, performances involving song, dance and acrobatic elements, up to puppet shows and shadow pantomime.

**Popular prose** is also a great heritage of Albanian folklore. Its subject matter and themes are varied.

The varied phenomena which our popular prose deals with form a reflection of our society in the past in many colours and from many angles. Our people have crystalized these phenomena into a number of types which, even though they often resemble one another, in both the skill with which they are developed and the action involved, have distinctive elements among them. The

basic theme of our popular prose is the struggle between good and evil. In building up the events on this basis, the people have created figures, who confront one another, locked in fierce struggle until the complete triumph of good and happiness has been achieved. Along with fables, conundrums and puzzles filled with figurative expressions and metaphors created by the people as tests of ingenuity continue to thrive. Likewise proverbs and anecdotes with the profundity of their ideas and the keenness of their observation, in which is concentrated the wisdom and age-old experience of the people themselves, are constantly being enriched.

The Albanologist, Gustav Weigand, has described the Albanian language as a Balkan language "par excellence". This description could be applied also to Albanian folklore in general, since, in addition to its national features, it has many motifs and characteristic elements in common with our neighbours. Of course these are the consequences of contacts or relations over many centuries, which have brought about many exchanges or borrowings also in folklore. By tracing the distribution of common motifs through comparative studies between Albanian folklore and the folklore of the neighbours, interesting observations can be made about a number of phenomena, indeed we can arrive at their origin, that is, among the most ancient inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. In this way the continuation of the Illyrians in the Albanians is brought out. Of course, what the people's traditions inherit from the distant past is not petrified in unchanging forms, because folklore does not remain stagnant, but moves along, flowing like an inexhaustible stream into which are poured the experience of many generations. During its course through the centuries, it is constantly undergoing changes both in form and content. Thus the motifs and means of expression of folklore develop in accord with the dynamic of life.

To close this panoramic presentation we must stress the unquestionable unity of Albanian folklore with all its diversity of sources: all that host of ancient or more recent motifs, borrowed or native, have been accumulated, layer upon layer, and have been merged into a single synthesis.

Their persistence in preserving the mother tongue, the habits and customs of our ancestors, our folk songs and dances, as well

as all the branches of folklore, have protected our people from the process of dilution and denationalization during centuries of oppression. Our folk tradition has always been of great value to our society. Formerly, in the Dark Ages, it compensated to a certain extent for the lack of schooling by educating the younger generations with the experience and wisdom of their elders. For the patriots of the period of our National Renaissance, folklore was a powerful weapon in their struggle for national independence. The important social, artistic, scientific and political function of this national heritage continues to this day.

The history of the recording of Albanian folklore begins with a group of proverbs published in 1635 by Frano Bardhi in his Latin-Albanian dictionary. From that time on, the study of Albanian folklore encountered the difficult conditions of the Ottoman occupation. Nevertheless, many patriots of the period of our National Renaissance, especially those who have grasped the importance of folklore, strove, heart and soul, to serve in this field, too, prompted by lofty patriotic aims. In Albania, as throughout all Europe, the collection of folksongs began with the verses, thus, for a time it was only the poetic side of folklore which was cultivated, while the musical side was left entirely fallow. The first publications on Albanian melody appeared during the 40's of this century. The collecting and study of our folk music has been actively pursued especially since the liberation of Albania. Under the care of the Party of Labour of Albania, characteristic groups of folk singers, dancers and instrumentalists were set up in the cultural centres established in the most remote corners of the homeland. From time to time local and national festivals have been organized. These festivals have been valuable in revealing previously unknown talents and beauties.

At the beginning of the 50's musical folklore was introduced into the programme of the Lyceum of Arts as a separate subject of study. Meanwhile the Albanian musicologists began to publish a series of original studies about folkdances and instruments, about the themes of songs as well as about the morphology of folk music and so on. These studies are a significant proof of the rapid development of musicology which, although it is a new science in Albanian culture, has achieved a number of outstanding results.

In September 1957, the State Ensemble of Folk Songs and Dances with a vocal, instrumental and choreographic complex was set up in Tirana. This Ensemble has presented the beauties of Albanian folklore even beyond the borders of Albania, winning the admiration of many peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and even being awarded top prizes. In 1960, the Institute of Oral, Musical and Choreographic Folklore with the respective archive, its collection of recorded songs and music and popular instruments was set up in Tirana. With the founding of this Institute more suitable conditions were created for the collection and study of folklore through research expeditions which are organized from time to time. The extension and deepening of the spheres of research, by adopting advanced methods and utilizing new technical devices, open wide prospects to the study of Albanian folklore.

In the period of the deepening of the cultural revolution, folklore continues to be an important factor in the ideo-aesthetic education of the masses, that is why it occupies a prominent place both in the repertoire of the professional artists as well as in that of the amateur groups set up in work centres or at the houses and centres of culture. Radio and television broadcast regular folklore programmes. Musical folklore has been introduced as a subject of study into the programmes of the secondary schools of art, as well as in that of the Higher Institute of Arts. Besides its social, political, scientific and other values, this inexhaustible source also serves the further development of Albanian art and culture, national in form and socialist in substance.

## EDUCATION

The struggle for the Albanian school has a long history. It begins as far back as the dark years of the Middle Ages, during the Ottoman occupation of the country. The Albanian has had to fight arms in hand for his education, just as for his freedom. He never separated his love for his country from his love for schooling and his mother tongue. The Albanian patriots considered the Albanian language and literature as vital to the struggle for the very existence of the nation. In 1873 they compiled a standard alphabet for the Albanian language.

Towards the beginning of 1885, patriots from the city of Korça, in the southeastern part of Albania, drew up a petition

seeking the opening of an Albanian Club and Albanian schools to be run by it. After persistent efforts, they succeeded in opening the first Albanian national school in Korça on March 7, 1887 (March 7 is now commemorated every year as the "Teacher's Day").

During its first year, the school had few pupils, but the following year their number increased to 200. It was a primary school in which the lessons were given in the Albanian language.

The opening of the first national school aroused great enthusiasm among the patriots all over the country. It prompted the opening of other similar schools in the various districts of Albania.

But, under the pressure of the Metropolitan of Korça and the Patriarch of Istanbul, the occupation authorities began to obstruct the existence of Albanian schools. Under this two-fold reaction, efforts to open other Albanian schools failed. Even the schools opened during 1888 were closed one after the other, with the exception of that of Korça, which continued to function at great sacrifice and in constant struggle with the Christian church institutions and the foreign occupiers. In 1891, the first director of this school was murdered, while the subsequent directors were imprisoned.

In 1892, the first Albanian elementary school for girls was opened in Korça. In the same year the bishop of Korça pronounced an anathema against the patriot teacher, Petro Nini Luarasi. During the final decade of the last century, the number of Albanian schools increased, while at the beginning of our century, they were opened even in some villages. They enrolled not only children but also adults for whom special night schools were established. Since the number of teachers was limited, giving lessons in Albanian became a question of honour and a lofty patriotic duty.

In 1912, after five centuries of bondage and continuous struggles, Albania gained its independence. This marks a memorable date in the history of the country and our school. But subsequent events, both national as well as international, made it impossible for Albania to enjoy this independence. Consequently, our school, too, was unable to consolidate itself. This was a period of marked ups and downs in the progress of the school. Under these conditions it was impossible for our school

to develop.

The period of the reactionary regime of Ahmed Zog (1924-1939) plus the time of the nazi-fascist occupation of Albania (1939-1944) was one of the gloomiest in the history of our school. The broad masses, over 85 percent of the population, remained illiterate. This was because the number of schools was greatly reduced. On the other hand, the establishment of the system of school fees, meant that the doors of those few existing schools were open only to the children of the wealthy. During the period of the nazi-fascist occupation, the Italian and German policy of denationalization was stepped up. Hundreds of teachers abandoned their schools and took up the rifle to fight in the ranks of the partisan units and brigades.

The foundations of our people's education were laid during the National Liberation War. The Albanian Communist Party (now the Party of Labour) charged the National Liberation Councils, nuclei of the people's state power, along with the organization of the war, with the task of organizing the people's education. Thus, they took up the task of opening primary schools and courses against illiteracy in all the liberated districts.

The 1944-45 school year (the first year after the liberation of Albania) was a record year for our school. Whereas during the 1938-39 school year Albania had 649 primary schools with 1349 teachers, during 1944-45 (although the country was devastated by the war) there were 928 primary schools functioning with 1743 teachers.

After liberation, our country pursued a revolutionary course to make education truly the property of the working people, of the workers and peasants.

In 1946, the school reform was carried out: education was proclaimed general and free of charge, elementary schooling was made compulsory, equal for both sexes, the state and secular character of the school was guaranteed, and so on. During the period from 1945 to 1955 a broad campaign was conducted to abolish illiteracy. 85 percent of the people were illiterate. This campaign was turned into a major state and social activity, bringing about the complete liquidation of this age-old plague. In 1952, the law was issued making elementary general education compulsory. Now 8 grade schooling has been compulsory for several years.

Albania was the only country in Europe without a University. This was set up in 1957.

Now Socialist Albania has a complete education system with a wide network of full and part-time 8 grade and secondary schools and many higher schools, without mentioning here the large number of kindergartens for pre-school children, which constitute the first link of our school system. In proportion to its population, Albania ranks among the first countries in the world today as regards the number of persons who attend the various categories of school. Today, out of every three persons in Albania, one attends a school. The University of Tirana has eight faculties with forty five specialties and about 16,000 students, in addition to the other higher institutes and its affiliates set up in the other centres of Albania. Every year the University of Tirana, or its affiliates, turns out six times as many cadres with higher training as the whole of Albania had in 1938.

The Albanian school is constantly strengthening its socialist features and physiognomy, its revolutionary character, both in its content and its structure. The reform which has placed the school on the basis of three components — lessons, productive labour, physical and military training — with Marxist-Leninist ideology running through all of them, is being successfully carried out. This revolutionary transformation of our school was made on the basis of a broad public discussion, in which all the broad strata of the people took part. This is a real revolution for our school.

Children start school when they are six years old, both in cities and in the countryside. Earlier the starting age was seven years. The change to six years was made bearing in mind two factors: first, the general cultural uplift of the population, hence, of the family, which enables them to give more help to their children and, second, the extension of pre-school education (for ages three, four and five years). Pre-school education has now become a constituent part of the school system of Albania.

The state pays the full cost of the school system in all its links. In our country there are no fees to pay in any category of school. The state pays for school buildings, their equipment, the salaries of teachers and the auxiliary personnel.

The family pays only for textbooks. But the prices of textbooks are more or less symbolic. For instance, for pupils up

to twelve or thirteen years of age, the textbooks for one school year cost the family about as much as an average worker's wage for one or one-and-a-half days. For a student at secondary school, a year's textbooks may cost as much as an average worker's wages for two days.

The kindergartens for pre-school children are of two categories: kindergartens without meals (here the family has no financial obligations) and kindergartens with meals. For the latter the family pays an amount which covers about 29 percent of the costs of the food, while the balance is paid by the state.

The problem of bursaries to maintain secondary and higher school students is solved in this way: the state pays full bursaries to students from families with many dependents, that is, with the lowest per capita incomes. The other families make a reasonable contribution.

To train an engineer it takes four years of study at the University plus a probationary period of one year's work in production, during which time he prepares his diploma thesis.

Let us take a student on a state bursary. Every year he lives ten months in the hostel. The other two months are his summer vacation. Hence he stays forty months all told. For this student the state spends what amounts to the average pay for a worker for thirty-six months. Hence, the burden of the state is by no means light.

The student's bursary covers his expenses for board and lodging at the "Student Town", for his textbooks with some pocket money for his minor expenses.

This does not include the probation period the student spends in production after four years, because during that period he works and receives the normal pay for his work. The Faculty he belongs to, provides him with a pedagogue who guides him in the preparation of his diploma thesis.

How many students does it take to open a school? This not so much a problem for cities where there are groups of students, where schools are opened with normal capacities. The problem arises in the villages and not so much for the villages of the southern districts of Albania, which are grouped together, but for those of certain districts of central and northern Albania, where the houses are still far from one another. As a rule, the secondary schools are opened at the centre of the cooperative,

which includes from five to ten villages. The upper cycle of the 8 grade schools (for ages ranging from ten, to thirteen or fourteen years) is usually opened in all villages or one school for two neighbouring villages when the children have no difficulty in attending. In many of these villages there are classes with from ten to fifteen pupils.

The most difficult problem is that of the elementary schools with children ranging from six to nine or ten years of age. It is aimed to ensure a minimum of twelve pupils per class, but this is not always achieved, for when houses of a village are widely scattered, schools are opened in each separate section of the village, in which case classes may have only six, seven or eight pupils in them. This is a sacrifice for the state, but this is done for the sake of enforcing the law of compulsory education. There are cases when, to make it easier for children to attend school, boarding schools of limited capacities are opened in mountain districts. The pupils are boarded and lodged there from Monday to Saturday spending the weekend with their families.

As we have already mentioned, 8 grade schooling is compulsory in Albania. This is fully realized both in town and countryside. After this, the students make their own choice. Most of them choose 4 year secondary education (general or vocational education, in which there are from 65 to 70 profiles and specialities to choose from). Vocational secondary schools admit students on the basis of a plan, because the state works out a correct proportion in training, for instance, nurses, electricians, teachers, engineers and others. Admission to secondary schools of general education is unrestricted.

In the rural areas, the profiles of the secondary schools conform to the needs of the countryside: agronomy, zooveterinary, fruit growing, horticulture, and so on. For the other specialties needed in the countryside, a number of peasant students are sent to city schools to be trained as mechanics, electricians, midwives, agrarian economists, and so on. Today students from the countryside in the secondary vocational schools of the Republic make up more than half the total contingent of students. This is in order to impart a greater impetus to the secondary education of the peasant students who, up to now, have not had, nor could have had, the same opportunities as those of the cities.

In addition to secondary education, the students who have been through 8 grade schooling can choose to attend 2-year courses (half teaching, half work) at which they acquire a trade skill. These courses are preferred by those who want to master a skill and start a job more quickly. These are called lower vocational schools.

There are others who, having been through 8 grade schools, that is having completed their compulsory schooling, want to start work directly in production. But they may not yet have reached the age of 16, the lowest age at which they can be admitted as workers. In this case, they are admitted as learners in workshops or factories, where they work half time (for which they receive the corresponding wages) and study the other half. They attend the system of courses which the enterprise itself opens according to its own profile.

For workers who have followed these two last systems there are part-time vocational secondary schools in which they can complete their secondary education in the profiles they have.

One detail worth mentioning is that the programmes of the vocational secondary schools are such that the subjects of general culture (mathematics, physics, chemistry — for those who pursue the technical profile, and literature, history, geography — for those who pursue the social-cultural profile) are the same as those of the secondary schools of general education. These prepare the students so that they can continue with higher studies, if they want, and not feel deprived of this opportunity, as they do in many other countries.

#### THE PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

The first edition of the newspaper, *Zëri i Popullit*, organ of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, was published on August 25, 1942. This day marks the date of the founding of the Albanian people's press. The course of 34 years which *Zëri i Popullit* and all the Albanian revolutionary press has traversed, is, at the same time, the revolutionary course our Party of Labour has followed, the course on which the press has grown and become stronger, has increased its militant spirit and its role as a bearer of information and a collective agitator and propagandist.

During the National Liberation War, apart from *Zëri i*

*Popullit*, other illegal organs were published, such as *Bashkimi* (organ of the National Liberation Front), *Kushtrimi i Lirisë* (organ of the Communist Youth), as well as organs in districts and military units.

While preserving and further developing its revolutionary traditions of the war years, during the years of socialist construction, our people's press has been increased and strengthened in quantity and quality. The numbers of newspapers, magazines, and other publications have increased and the programmes of Albanian radio and television, the releases of the *Albanian Telegraphic Agency*, etc., have been added. In Albania today, there are twenty-five newspapers with a total circulation of 47 million copies per year.

The newspapers, *Zëri i Popullit* and *Bashkimi*, are dailies. A number of other newspapers appear twice per week, such as *Puna*, central organ of the Trade Union organization, *Zëri i Rinisë*, organ of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Youth Union, and *Lufjtëtarë*, central organ of the People's Army. Other important organs are the theoretical magazine, *Rruja e Partisë*, organ of the Central Committee of the PLA, and *Drita* and *Nëntori*, both literary organs of the League of Writers and Artists, the illustrated magazine, *Ylli*, the magazine, *Shqiptarja e Re*, organ of the Albanian Women's Union, as well as many others aimed at different categories of readers. Local papers are published in the administrative centres of fourteen districts.

In Albania before liberation, there were only six newspapers, and these were completely in the service of the anti-popular regime in power. The most important newspaper of that time, *Drita*, was published in only 6,000 copies a day, whereas now, *Zëri i Popullit* is published in 105,000 copies per day. The number of newspapers which are distributed today, in town and countryside, all over the country, is twenty times greater than before liberation. The number of magazines published today is nine times greater than before liberation, three times greater than in 1950, and twice as many as in 1960.

Besides magazines and newspapers, books with more than 800 different titles, totalling 8.5 million copies are published each year. The number of titles published today is more than 100 times greater than before liberation.

Radio and television occupy an important place. *Radio Tirana*

is a powerful station that is heard in all parts of the world. It broadcasts regularly every day, from 5 a.m. till midnight, in 17 foreign languages. Four local radio stations have been set up in outlying centres, and these relay *Radio Tirana* or broadcast special programmes according to local conditions and requirements. Although quite new, Albanian television is very widespread both in town and countryside. With the completion of the electrification of the whole country (October 1970) radio and television programmes are followed even in the most remote parts of the country. The daily papers, too, are delivered in these zones within the day.

The magazine, *Albania Today*, has now been coming out for several years. It publishes different materials about the development and socialist transformations in Albania, as well as about the determined struggle that the PLA is waging against imperialism and modern revisionism. The materials in this magazine have aroused special interest among foreign readers. This organ now comes out once in two months, in five languages. The illustrated magazine *New Albania* has a history of thirty years and is widely distributed. It is published in nine languages with a total print of 170,000 copies in each edition. The scientific magazine *Studia Albanica*, which publishes scientific studies on Albanology in the French language, is for foreign readers. The Albanian people's press is characterized by high ideo-political, scientific, and cultural level and a militant revolutionary spirit. As a result it has been turned into an ever more powerful means in the hands of the broad masses for the education and mobilization of the working people in the construction of socialism and the defence of the country. Our press devotes special attention to international affairs; it consistently reflects the principled struggle of our Party and the Albanian people against imperialism, revisionism, and the oppression and exploitation of different peoples of the world.

An outstanding characteristic of our people's press is that it is based firmly on the broad masses of the people. This is expressed in the fact that our press, the radio and television, and the various publications are not only the property of the masses, tribunes of their revolutionary thinking, but also the product of the masses and a direct expression of the line of the masses. Through the voluntary correspondents and collaborators of the press and the

radio and television service, the masses bring the thoughts, experience, and the beautiful language of the working people into the press. It is not just the professional journalist who brings out the paper or the magazine, and neither are the radio and television broadcasts done by the staff editors alone. Large numbers of people of different categories and professions, from city and village, who are close to the life and daily struggle of the working masses, to production, write for the press and speak on the radio and television.

Matters of the press, like all other matters in the life of the country, are regulated on the basis of special laws. The Constitution of our country sanctions the right of every citizen to have his say freely, using the organs of the press, radio and television for this purpose. The most favourable conditions have been created for the practical implementation of this right, and the masses are urged and encouraged by every means to exercise it.

In socialist Albania, the journalist is an honoured figure. He is esteemed and respected by the masses for his objectivity, his honesty, his lofty moral figure. On the basis of the law, the journalist also enjoys rights as an author. The people working in radio and television and on the press have their own organization, the Union of Albanian Journalists, which publishes a monthly organ, *Tribuna e Gazetarit*.

#### THE FIGURATIVE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

The objects of artistic interest from pre-history take us back to the 6th millennium BC. Outstanding among them are anthropomorphic ceramics, and original objects of the Cakran-Dunavec cult (Middle Neolithic age), the great pots of Maliq and Kamnik, with painted geometric decoration (late Neolithic age), the little terracottas of Maliq women (Neolithic age). The vessels and the cups with very pronounced handles on the sides, began to appear during the Bronze Age. This is evidence of the beginnings of the Illyrian tribes.

**The art of Illyrian tribes is distinguished in the Iron Age.**

(The 11th to the 5th centuries BC). The ceramic material found in the tumula (burial mounds) erected everywhere within the borders of Albania today and outside them, in the villages of Barç, Kuç i zi (near Korça), Pazhdoc (near Elbasan) etc., are

extremely varied in forms. So is that of the south, painted in the style of geometric designs in a brown colour against a background of light red, called the "devollit" style. The bronze weapons also have geometric decoration. The rich decoration of the bronze shaft of the weapon often ends with beautiful zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms.

**In the Illyrian cities** (the 5th to the 2nd centuries BC) the walls made of huge quadrangular and polygonal stones are imposing. The earliest gates have the form of a pointed arch (the peak of Aitoi near Saranda). They have majestic porticos (Dimal and Zgerdesh), theatres and hippodromes (Amantia, near Vlora), monumental tombs (Selcë e Poshtme, near Pogradec) etc. There are many little votive statues, and a wealth of ornaments like the decorative plates of the bronze belt (3rd century BC) from the rich finds at Selca e Poshtme.

**The cities of the coastal colonies** (the 6th to 3rd centuries BC) that developed art of the classical style, have monumental architectural works, like the Lion Gate and the Theatre of Butrint, the Nymphaeum and the Monument of the Athletes in Apollonia, the amphitheatre in Dyrrah, etc. Among the best known works of sculpture found, there are the head of Apollonia, the Goddess of Butrint (3rd century BC), the portrait of Agrippa (1st century BC), the head of Demosthenes (3rd century BC). The stelae produced in Apollonia are rich in ornamentation and reliefs, sometimes with three, one above the other. There is great variety in the many bronze statuettes, ceramics, mainly with red figures on a black background, and the terra-cottas. The most ancient mosaic is "The Head of a Girl" (3rd century BC) found in Durrës. The Roman mosaic in Apollonia, Durrës and elsewhere, is mainly in geometric designs of two or more colours.

The floors of basilicas of **early Mediaeval times** in central and south Albania, are paved in mosaic. In the baptistery of Butrint (5th century AD), in the Basilica of Lin on Lake Ohri (6th century AD), the mosaics represent mainly birds, vines, fish, etc. Their colours blend in tonal effects. The only Byzantine wall mosaic (10th century AD) is found in a chapel in Durrës.

From the 6th to the 8th centuries, like the Illyrians, the **early Albanian tribes** built burial mounds, the majority of them in the northern Albania (near Koman Village and elsewhere). This

culture is distinguished for the working of metals, and its ornaments in bronze, silver and gold. On the earrings, clasps and pendants there are images of women, horses, etc. They continue a number of the forms of Illyrian ornaments.

The monuments of the Mediaeval architecture, are to be found in abundance in the south in the Byzantine style, while in the north they are less frequent and in the Roman style. The church of Perhondi (10th century) in typical Byzantine style, is a cathedral, with a bell-tower attached, like western churches. The church of Saint Nikolla in Mesopotam (13th century) which looks like a fortress, is rich in heraldic reliefs, capitals, etc. An outstanding monument in the typical picturesque Byzantine style of the 13th century is the church of Saint Mary at Pojan. The church of Saint Mëhilli, erected on a rock outcrop below Berat Castle, and Saint Triadha within its walls, belong to the 14th century. The Icons of the 12th century are of classical Byzantine style: Saint Mary Odigitria in the Blajshtona cave above Lake Prespa, and others. In the icons of the 13th century, the religious stylization is pronounced, whereas those of the 14th century express more intimate emotions; the Saint Mary in the church of Saint Mary's Rest, in Berat, etc. The mural paintings of the refectory of Pojan monastery (1261-1328) are of a classic grandeur with transparent colours. The paintings of Saint Mary of Mborja (1380), and those of Saint Mary of the island of Maligrad, in Lake Prespa, are remarkably expressive. The religious objects are artistically rich and skillfully executed. The epitaph of Gllanevica, embroidered to the order of Gjergj Araniti in 1373, is a document of great historical importance and a masterpiece of art.

The Albanian-Turkish wars during the 15th century, hindered the construction of monumental buildings and paintings. After the Turkish invasion, in the 16th century, iconography, mural-painting, etc., were revived within the religious buildings which are not distinguished from their outward appearance. Berat is outstanding. The seven icons of "the great feasts" and the beautiful gates of Berat evangelistry are of marvelous precision. These are attributed to Onufri from Elbasan (mid. 16th century), a painter of murals in a series of churches in Kostur (Greece), Berat, and various villages of Elbasan. His paintings tend to be more materialistic, have dramatic expressions and outstandingly

decorative colours. The icons and mural paintings of his son, Nikolla (the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries) have elongated and more aristocratic figures. There were a number of other distinguished painters. In the early 18th century iconography and mural painting took a new impetus, and realist elements of the baroque style were introduced into them. In 1726, David Selenicasi, painted the interiors of Saint Nikolla's of Voskopoja. From the 16th century, buildings of the Muslim religion began to be built. The lead cupolo Mosque (18th century) in Shkodra imitates Arabic architecture, but in the Dervishes' Temple in Berat (1791) and the mosque of Et-hem Beu in Tirana (1791-1821) elements of local folk art are included.

The revival of economic life and trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, brought about a growth of the cities with a spontaneous but original and rational solution to the problems of town planning, and led to the development of the popular architecture. The Gjirokaster tower house, rising three or four stories on the steep mountainous terrain evolved. A typical example is the Zekate house. The houses with porches in Berat link their white facades to form "the city of one thousand windows". Shkodra's two storied house with a balcony extends horizontally amidst a garden surrounded by very high walls. The skilled trades and artistic peasant handicrafts developed greatly. Wood carving reached a superb artistic level in the intricate three-dimensional designs of the altar screens. Notable examples are those of the seat of the Orthodox Bishop of Korça (late 18th century), Berat cathedral (1850) and that of Leus village church near Përmet (round the year 1800). The interiors of dwellings were ornamented with wood carving (the styles varying according to each district) and Albanian wood carvers became renowned all over the Balkans. The fame of weapons, such as daggers, pistols, rifles and their equipment, as well as ornamental buckles and other objects decorated with various techniques, especially in filigree, produced in Shkodra, Prizren, Elbasan and elsewhere, spread far beyond Albania. The metal ornaments worn by the women of the Northern Highlands faithfully continued the tradition of the ornaments of the Albanian culture of early mediaeval times.

**The Art of the National Renaissance** begins from after the year 1880, in the struggle for national independence and freedom

from the Turkish rule. It is secular, breaking away from the religious iconography, and treats patriotic and ethnographic subjects. Kolë Idromeno (1860-1939) is a distinguished painter, architect and artist of this period. The portrait of his sister (1883) has social-psychological depth and a delicate artistic interpretation. Of particular interest for their portrayal of the life and customs of the country are "Shkodra Wedding" as well as many realistic scenes in compositions with religious subjects, like "Two Streets". The main subject of the art of National Renaissance is the figure of Gjergj Kastriot-Skanderbeg. Spiro Xega (1863-1953), an amateur painter and patriot, produced eight variants of Skanderbeg's portrait. His most original work is "Shahin Matraku's çeta" with its subject from the life of patriotic insurgents.

After the proclamation of the independent Albanian state in 1912, the conditions created for artistic activity were not very favourable — it was left to personal initiative. From 1932 a number of monuments, works of the sculptor Odhise Paskali (1903) were erected, such as that of the "National Fighter" in Korça, a realistic statue, with a strong expression and Albanian psychological characteristics. His bust of Skanderbeg (1939) has a legendary-epic spirit. The painting of this period is realistic, but inclined towards lyricism. The motifs of Vangjush Mio (1891-1957) are mostly from the streets and environment of Korça and Pogradec, joyful landscapes, full of light and colour. "A Street in Korça" is typical for his work in which, in his own way, he expresses his love for the fatherland. Varied, more demanding in its search for artistic expression, is the work of Zef Kolombi (1907-1949), a strict draftsman who uses the technique of "plain air". His portraits, such as his "Self-portrait" have dramatic force, his landscapes like "The Harvest" reflect the melancholy and stagnation of the time.

The people's state power, born from the National Liberation War, that was established in the year 1944, and the policy of the Communist Party (today the Party of Labour) of Albania are very favourable to the development of art, which is considered as an important factor of the people's culture. In the first 10-15 years many busts and statues were erected. The monument to Skanderbeg by Janaq Paço with a popular and romantic spirit was erected in Kruja (in 1959), while the monument to Stalin, by

O. Paskali (1949) and the monument to Lenin, by Kristina Hoshi (1954) were erected in Tirana. The busts of "Qemal Stafa" (1948) by J. Paço, "Vojo Kushi" (1949) by O. Paskali, are permeated by heroic and revolutionary pathos. At this period the first compositional tableaux were painted. The National Liberation War was the predominant theme. "A Story from the National Liberation War", by Nexhmedin Zajmi is of a descriptive character. While "The Liberation of Tirana" by Bukurosh Zajmi, is more of a summing up. Gradually the theme of reconstruction and socialist construction began to occupy an important place. In "Voluntary Labour at the Stalin Combine", by Abdurrahim Buza, it is reflected in an original manner. Important works with historical themes, like "Bajram Curri at the Cave of Dragobia" by Guri Madhi, were created. Year by year artistic organizations and institutions have been set up and the creative activity and the number of artists have increased. According to the directives of the Party, that art should be in the service of the people and express their revolutionary aspirations, the ideals of communism, the figurative arts, too, follow the creative method of socialist realism. Since the year 1960, while the socialist construction has been advancing in fierce struggle against the internal and external class enemy, resisting the imperialist-revisionist pressure, art, in general, has become more profound in its content and artistic expression, and more firmly based on its own national experience. The compositions with themes from the National Liberation War and history, express patriotic revolutionary emotions. "The Vanguard of the Vengeance Battalion", by Sali Shijaku, has an epic spirit, while Fatmir Haxhiu's "Skrockë, February 1944" has a military-historical spirit.

Painting gives a broader reflection of the heroism of work. While Zef Shoshi's "The Cooperativists' Return to their Village", generalizes a moment from the life of the socialist countryside, Agim Faja's "The Struggle Against the Drought" is a monumental decorative (panel) with the people's solidarity at work as its theme.

In sculptural portrait, works reflecting the new features of the man moulded with the lofty ideals of socialism are being created. The bust of comrade Enver Hoxha by O. Paskali (1966) is considered one of the most important works of the art of socialist

realism. The energy, profound thought, farsighted view of the leader of our people is reflected in this work. One of the monuments of this period is "The Liberating Partisan" (1964) in Përmet.

The 15th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1965 reached the conclusion that socialist realism had proved itself as a method in Albanian art and should play a still greater role in the communist education of the masses. After 1966, a series of revolutionary actions and movements led by the Party began. Painting, sculpture and graphic art responded to the directives of the Party and the revolutionization of the country reflecting the transformations that were going on, and sharpening their proletariat partisanship. With the improvement of material conditions, the demands of the masses for art increased. Many important national and personal exhibitions were opened. Many works of major genres and proportions were created and the artistic expression was enriched. The statue "Hold High the Revolutionary Spirit", by Muntaz Dhrami (1966) quickly became a symbol of socialist Albania. In the following years, a series of important monuments have been erected, some of them by groups of sculptors, like the solemn and expressive monument to Skanderbeg (1968) in Tirana, the Independence Monument in Vlora (1972), the monument to the Four Heroines (1971) in Rëshen, the monument of Mushqeta on the outskirts of Tirana (1969). The "Monument to the War of 1920" near Vlora (1970) and "The Monument to the Martyrs of Borova" (1968) near Erseka, and others include beautiful reliefs. The bust of the heroine of the independence of the Fatherland "Shote Galica" by K. Rama is realistic, expressive, monumental. M. Dhrami's statue of the Labour Heroine "Shkurte Pal Vata" is pervaded by revolutionary enthusiasm. In painting, many tableaux generalize the socialist life. The subject of many compositions is the construction of the big projects. "The Builders of Light" by Danish Jukniu is inspired by the irresistible vigour of the drive to build a gigantic hydro-electric power station. Vilson Kilica's "December 1967" shows the people's solidarity to overcome the damage inflicted by natural calamities. The defence of the country is a theme extensively treated. In the conditions of the construction of socialism in Albania in unceasing struggle against the imperialist and revisionist

blockade, the National Liberation War and the historical past in art, have a contemporary tone. Among the finest creations of the art of socialist realism, is "People's Hero, Vojo Kushi, on the Fascist Tank" by S. Shijaku, a dramatic composition with intense colours and epic grandeur. The new man created in socialism occupies a place in the portraits. The landscapes reflect nature transformed by the hand of man. Other genres, too, like drawings, caricatures, etc., have developed. Great changes have occurred in the planning and appearance of the city and the village, especially after the 1960's. Architecture of simple feature and popular spirit assumed a new impetus. It is seen in a series of buildings, like the building of the Central Committee of the Party, the Palace of Culture in Tirana (by a group of architects), the "V.I. Lenin Party School", the Tourist Hotel in Gjirokastra, etc.

In 1973 the 4th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania criticized bourgeois and revisionist modernist influences. The ideological struggle strengthened the art of socialist realism, encouraged the artistic creativity and deepened its proletarian partisanship and national character. The opening of the National Exhibition of Figurative Arts dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Liberation (Tirana, November 1974) was a great success. In paintings the dynamic life and optimism of the working class and the whole people is reflected in vivid colours. Tableaux of a monumental character deal with great historical events.

### THE THEATRE

The foundations of the present day Albanian theatre were laid during the period of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation War.

Our first theatre was called "The People's Theatre". It was given this name because it was born as a partisan theatre, in the mountains, in the prisons, in the city quarters and villages, wherever the fight was waged against the fascist occupiers. On the 24th of May, 1944, on the eve of the liberation of the whole country, at the historic town of Përmet, the first professional theatre in the history of the country was set up.

Just as in music, dance, costumes, artistic craftsmanship, architecture, etc., in the field of theatre too, the Albanian people have a rich tradition. Evidence of the preservation and

development of this tradition are the amateur theatrical groups which we find in early times and which played an important role in the history of the Albanian theatre. These groups were developed especially in the main cities of the country such as Shkodra, Korça, Gjirokastra, Elbasan, etc., where they functioned as groups of various patriotic and progressive societies created by the workers, craftsmen, patriotic intellectuals and progressive youth.

The progressive ideas which they brought out through a repertoire built up of original dramatic works, or by staging outstanding works of world progressive drama, strengthened the patriotic and political consciousness of the people, and supported the democratic forces in their struggle against reaction. The regimes in power not only did not give any assistance to the development of these groups, but they persecuted them, dissolving the groups and condemning their representatives. Therefore, the enthusiastic efforts of many amateurs of the theatre were not crowned with the creation of a professional theatre. This theatre was born much later.

At the end of the last century and up to the thirties of this century, the world famous Albanian actor, Aleksandër Moisiu (1879-1935) was alive and performing. Finding it impossible to realize his ardent desire to set up a national theatre, he lived all his life abroad. The world progressive theatre considered Aleksandër Moisiu one of the greatest actors of the time.

Today, there are 8 drama theatre companies in Albania, 15 "estrada" companies specializing in humour and satire and 26 puppet theatre companies. In the tradition of the "People's Theatre" the other theatres also bear the names of other outstanding compatriots, who have lived at different times. The theatre of the city of Korça, for example, bears the name of the great poet and patriot of the National Renaissance, "A.Z. Çajupi", the theatre in the city of Shkodra bears the name of the revolutionary poet of the thirties, "Migjeni"; that of the city of Durrës, the name of the great Albanian actor, "Aleksandër Moisiu".

The number of amateur theatre groups has increased beyond all comparison with the past. Almost every work and production centre, village, military detachment, school and institution has its own amateur theatrical group, where the lovers of dramatic

art gather regularly after work and prepare performances which they stage, both for their fellow workers and also for others. Festivals are organized systematically on a district, regional and national scale. The two theatres, amateur and professional, assist, influence, and inspire each other. While the amateurs learn acting skills from the professional theatre, the professionals, for their part, learn a great deal from the freshness, the natural acting, and the creative enthusiasm of the amateurs, and also find new talents among them. The professional theatres carry out systematic work with the amateur movement. The most experienced actors are charged with this work.

The theatre draws its new talents from the amateur movement and also from the schools. In 1946, the first secondary school of art the "Jordan Misja" school, was opened, while in 1959, the "A. Moisiu" higher school for actors was opened. This is one of the branches of the Higher Institute of Arts. In recent years producers have been trained at this school too. Courses and other forms are organized for the training of directors of the amateur theatrical movement.

Although each theatre has its own premises with all the necessary facilities, both for the spectators and for the actors, the theatre companies also go out to their audiences at work and production centres, in town and countryside. Each year, every company must stage 40 to 60 percent of its performances outside its own theatre.

The development of the theatre in breadth has brought about an improvement in its quality. The building up of the repertoires of the theatres mostly with national works has been one of the fundamental concerns of the theatre. Proceeding from the principle that there cannot be a truly national theatre without a national drama, today's theatre has completely solved this problem. This is one of its outstanding victories.

Hundreds of dramatic works have now entered the treasury of the national theatre. Our theatre cannot be conceived without such works and performances as: *The Prefect* by B. Levonja, *Our Land* by K. Jakova, *The Fisherman's Family* by S. Pitarka, *The Carnival of Korça* by S. Çomora, *The Highland Girl* by L. Papa, *The Second Face* by D. Agolli, *The Bullet in the Dowry* by F. Kraja, etc. An important place here is occupied by the staging of outstanding works of our prose such as *The Swamp*, based on the

novel of the same title by F. Gjata, *The General of the Dead Army*, based on the novel of the same title by I. Kadare, *The Dead River*, also based on the novel of the same name by J. Xoxe.

Appreciating the values of the progressive drama of other peoples, our theatre has staged works from the treasury of world culture such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; Molière's *The Miser*, *Tartuff*, *The Noble Bourgeois*; Goldoni's *Mirandolina*; *The Auditor* by Gogol; *The Enemies* by Gorki; *Love and Intrigue* by Schiller; *Nora* by Ibsen; *Arturo Ui* by Brecht and so on.

The Albanian theatre is a theatre of socialist realism which truthfully reflects reality in its revolutionary development. The main aim of the actors is the faithful characterization of the figures they interpret in their dialectical development. The Albanian theatre puts the actor, the real living man, at the centre of its attention, and places each of its components and the components of the scene at his service or at the service of the idea which he bears. This is also the aim of the scene painter, composer, lighting operator, etc. The Albanian theatre is waging a fierce struggle both against naturalism, melodrama, theatricality, etc., and also against the ugly features of the so-called "modern" theatre of today, the formalist, absurd, abstract, and "anti-everything" theatre, which has nothing in common with the realist and progressive theatre.

As an indication of the care and esteem for the place and the role of the theatre in our society, artists may be awarded the high and honoured titles, "People's Artist", and "Merited Artist", which are held by many people of the stage. One of the highest decorations of the country is that of "Hero of Socialist Labour". There are stage artists among the ranks of the most highly honoured people who hold this decoration.

#### MUSIC

Albania, this country at the crossroads between East and West, has ancient musical traditions. Through their architecture, sculpture, ceramics, mosaics and coins with effigies of dancers and instrumentalists, the early centres of southern Illyria, show us that musical culture has flourished here for a very long time. Along with archaeological monuments, such as the arena of

entertainment at Bylis, the stadium at Amantia, the theatres at Butrint, Orik and Durrës, the odeum at Pojan and at other centres in which concerts and musical performances were given further convincing evidence of this is provided in information from certain Greek and Roman classical authors. The cult of the Muses, itself, the legends and myths around certain marvellously talented Illyrian artists, prove what importance was attached to music in the life of our ancestors.

Just as for Europe as a whole, for Albania, too, the early mediaeval centuries are dark and almost impenetrable. From that period there is only one prominent musician in our tradition, Niketa of Rameziana who, during the 4th century, composed a number of Paleo-Christian songs, the best known of which is *Te Deum Laudamus*.

From the 4th century, with the invasions of the barbarians, one of the gloomiest periods of our history began. Then, for about ten centuries on end, our country was under the bondage of the Byzantine Empire. It is not to be wondered at what we have to pass on to the 12th century to come across a musician like Jan Kukuzeli from Durrës, the outstanding master of Byzantine music, who, through his broad and many sided activity as a composer, a marvellous singer, a brilliant theoretician and reformer, opened new paths and gave a fresh impetus to musical development.

Evidence is not lacking of the development of the art of music at the time of the state of Arbër. The Albanians who emigrated from this state and settled in southern Italy, where they founded the Arbëresh colony during the 15th century, took with them some old musical manuscripts which are a living source for the history of our music.

With the onslaught of the Ottoman Turks, Albania was afflicted with chaos for nearly another five centuries. The Turkish occupation interrupted any artistic development or manifestation for a very long time. During those dark days of oppression and ruthless exploitation, the very existence of our people was in jeopardy. When the Albanian cities gradually began to recover, music also began to revive through the setting up of the odd society, fanfare or band. The evidence we have of musical activity from that period is mainly connected with the Christian sphere where certain composers of hymns like Gjergj

Papazima and Grigor Manesi (18th century) or Krisanth Mediti, former bishop of Durrës during the first half of the 19th century, were prominent. Krisanth Mediti was active in cultivating the fields of music and musicology, publishing a number of studies on Byzantine music, organizing choral groups, and training many pupils.

During the second half of the 19th century, in addition to fighting for freedom and national independence, Albanian patriots spared no efforts to promote art and culture. Overcoming many obstacles and hardships, a school for music was opened in Shkodra in 1878 and a band was set up. From that period we have some vocal and instrumental compositions by Palok Kurti. On the eve of throwing off the shackles of five hundred years of bondage, the national movement made rapid progress in all fields. However national independence in 1912 found Albania with few musicians and only a few brass bands in the main cities. At that time our country was backward from all points of view. The lack of cadres with technical-professional training, the low educational and cultural level were, of course, not suitable conditions for the flowering of Albanian music. Under such circumstances a few composers emerged from the ranks of the people, such as Frano Ndoja, Martin Gjoka, Thanas Floqi and others, who, in addition to vocal songs and romances, turned out some instrumental works like rhapsodies, fantasies, medleys, and the odd symphony. But the proclamation of independence did not ensure the freedom and territorial integrity of Albania. The Balkan War and, later, the First World War, turned Albania into a field of battles with all their devastating consequences. In such adverse political, economic and social circumstances, the necessary conditions for music to flourish were absent.

A new stage began for our country in 1920 when the foreign troops were driven out of Albania. At that time, Thoma Nasi, the conductor of the "Vatra" band, was very active in many directions.

During the period of Ahmed Zog's monarchic regime (1925-1939) art and culture were not supported and, as a consequence, such composers as Martin Gjoka, Luigj Filaj, Kristo Kono, Pjetër Dungu and others, as well as such singers as Maria Paluca (Kraja), Gjysepina Kosturi, Jorgjia Filçe (Truja), Tefta Tashko

(Koço), Mihal Ciko, Kristaq Antoniu, and others did not find favorable conditions to exercise their artistic talents. Some of the few technically and professionally trained Albanian composers, like Fan Noli and Thoma Nasi, were obliged to emigrate abroad instead of contributing to music in their homeland. Abroad, Fan Noli composed a number of symphonic poems based on Albanian themes and published his musicological study entitled *Beethoven and the French Revolution*.

In 1939 new misfortunes descended upon the Albanian people, with the fascist occupation of the homeland.

During the National Liberation War, some clandestine artistic formations were organized with a repertoire of patriotic and partisan songs. During the heat of the war, in July 1944, in the region of Opar, the Ensemble of the People's Army was set up under the direction of Gaqo Avrazi.

Right after the liberation of Albania, the State Choir was set up, and later (1941) this was incorporated in the Albanian Philharmonia.

1947 marked the inauguration in Tirana of the Lyceum of Arts which, in addition to the branches for the training of middle level music cadres, also includes a branch of ballet. Now, with the constant increase in artistic education in Albania, there are five secondary schools of art in various districts, and seven 8 grade art schools.

The Higher Institute of Arts, which includes the Conservatorium, was opened in Tirana in 1961. It trains singers, instrumentalists, composers, conductors, musicologists, music teachers, etc.

The setting up of the Albanian Philharmonia stimulated stage performances. In 1950, a ballet group was organized and this was later incorporated in the Opera and Ballet Theatre. The first Albanian work to be performed after liberation was the operetta *Dawn* (1953) composed by Kristo Kono on the basis of Kolë Jakova's libretto. In December 1958, the first Albanian Opera *Mrika*, composed by Prenk Jakova, based on Lazar Siliqi's libretto was staged. A series of operettas by Albanian composers were performed, such as P. Dungu's *The Golden Net*, T. Daia's *Leila* and *Golden Autumn*, T. Harapi's children's operetta *The Story of the Forest*, N. Zoraqi's *The Idler*, Kozma Lara's *Spring Days*, A. Prodani's *The Bridegroom Was Transferred* and

others. Later on the Albanian repertoire was enriched by such operas as *The Spring* by T. Daia, *The Flower of Remembrance* by K. Kono, *Skanderbeg* by P. Jakova, *The Sons of Skanderbeg* by A. Grimci, *The Heroine* by V. Nova, *Beyond the Fog* by P. Gaci, *The Commissar* by N. Zoraqi, *The Awakening* by T. Harapi and others.

Meanwhile, the genre of ballet did not lag behind. The first Albanian ballet *Halili and Hajrija* composed by Tish Daia, on the basis of the drama by Kolë Jakova, with choreography by Panajot Kanaçe, was performed in January 1963. Then came *Delina* by C. Zadeja; *The Boy Partisan* by K. Laro, *The Mountain Girl* by N. Zoraqi (choreography), *The Fearless Eagle*, *The Fisherman's Sons* and others.

During the years of the people's state power, the Albanian composers have cultivated all the forms of vocal music ranging from songs and romances, to cantatas and oratorios. The main contributors in these two genres are K. Kono, K. Trako, P. Dungu, K. Uçi, R. Mara, T. Harapi, T. Hoshafi, A. Mulla, V. Çangu and others. They also cultivated the forms of instrumental music, miniatures for various instruments ranging from chamber music formations like duets, trios, quartets, quintets and so on, in which the main contributors were T. Daia, T. Harapi, N. Zoraqi, R. Sokoli, A. Grimei, M. Kapidani, up to the major forms of instrumental music like suites, overtures, ballads, rhapsodies, symphonic dances, and so on, the main contributors of which were S. Gjoni, L. Diddari, Sh. Kusha and others; or concertos for violin, flute, cello and piano with orchestra, and programmatic or symphonic poems, etc.

All these composers have striven to enrich the national artistic repertoire with something new and original. Of course it was no easy job for the first generation of composers after liberation to forge ahead with such small forces and without any adequate artistic heritage; while the younger generation, which has grown up in this climate, found the ground already cleaned, and they improved style, form and technique. Almost none of these composers has yet reached the peak of his achievements, which are constantly on the ascent, none has said his final word. Many genres of Albanian music are still only budding, but they are thriving well, nurtured as they are by the inexhaustible source of folk creativeness. Three decades are a very short period in the

history of music but in spite of that in Albania during these last three decades an unprecedented development has been achieved in music, which reflects the rapid development of our people in all fields of life. Basing themselves on their native soil, that is, on the folklore of the country, the Albanian composers have avoided abstract and decadent trends. Their aesthetic aim is "national in form and socialist in substance", as the basic principle of socialist realism. Meanwhile the new Albanian culture carried on the tradition of the artistic past of the country. Consequently, it also developed the branch of science, musicology, which greatly assisted the flourishing of music through conferences, creative discussions, and different publications.

Now a word or two about concert life in Albania. In September 1937, the Ensemble of Folk Songs and Dances, with a vocal instrumental and choreographic complex was set up in Tirana. This Ensemble has often presented the beauties of Albanian folklore outside the borders of the country in many countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, and has won the highest awards. Apart from this Ensemble, that of the People's Army and the collective of the Opera and Ballet Theatre, extensive artistic activity is carried on by the Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra, the orchestras of the secondary schools of art, the orchestra of the Higher Institute of Arts, as well as a number of symphony orchestras, set up in the other cities of Albania, such as Shkodra, Korça, Elbasan, Durrës, etc. To these must be added forty or more bands set up in various districts, especially among army detachments as well as the smaller orchestras of thirteen professional variety theatre companies. One of the distinctive features of musical development in socialist Albania is the mass participation in scores of workers' clubs and houses of culture in the cities, which together with some hundreds of cultural centres of the countryside, carry out a wide range of artistic activities. Every year festivals of new songs are organized by the Albanian Radio and Television Service, as well as by the houses of culture and young Pioneers' centres in the districts. Every year the May Concerts are organized in the capital as well as national contests of variety theatre, bands, workers' ensembles, groups from agricultural cooperatives and, especially the regional and national folklore festivals. All these contribute to the very

vigorous concert life in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania.

## CINEMATOGRAPHY

The first Albanian documentary film was put on the screen on May Day, 1947. This day marked the birth of cinematographic art in Albania.

The "New Albania" Film Studio which at first turned out newsreel films was founded in 1951. Later, with the creation of the material possibilities and the training of the necessary cadres, it became possible to produce feature films. The first Albanian feature film, a short one, was *Her Children*, turned out in 1957, which deals with the struggle against the prejudices of parents, while the first full length Albanian feature film is *Tana* (1958) based on the novel of the same name by Fatmir Gjata, dealing with life in our countryside during the post-liberation years.

Within a short period, Albanian cinematography outgrew its "infancy" and now has fully earned an important place in the field of the new socialist culture in Albania. Today our cinematography produces more than twelve feature films a year (some of them in colour) in addition to numerous documentary and newsreel films.

Up to now tens of feature films and hundreds of documentaries and newsreels have been produced. They have dealt with the most varied problems from the life of our people, giving a clear reflection of the efforts, the self-sacrifice and victories of the broad masses in their battle against everything alien and reactionary; of the revolutionary drive of our people to carry out the tasks of building the new socialist society. One of the most important themes of Albanian cinematography continues to be the National Liberation War of the Albanian people. It serves to evoke for the younger generation, the most glorious page of our history. Thanks to its lofty content and richness of ideas, the Albanian film makes a major contribution to the problem of the education of the masses of the people with the moral principles and ethics of our new society.

Now the Albanian film has begun to appear on the screens abroad, in international festivals and during the Week of the Albanian Film, which has been organized in several countries of the world.

## THE THESAURUS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

The National Library is one of the most important cultural institutions in our country, both because of the large number of books it has available and because of the work it does to publicize and spread them among the masses.

The library has a priceless collection of publications and manuscripts, which increases its scientific and bibliographic value, not only on a national level but also internationally. This is best reflected in its collection of Albanology, which is considered the richest in the world.

Today it is a recognized fact that for anyone studying Albanological science, whether an Albanian or a foreigner, it is essential to turn to the materials in our National Library.

Of particular importance is the collection of antiquities, which includes very old and rare publications, incunabula and manuscripts of the period from the 15th to the 18th centuries, most of which refer directly or indirectly to various Albanian problems in the fields of geography, history, archaeology, ethnography, folklore, linguistics, literature and so on. In reviewing the bibliography *Albanica*, the noted historian, Karl Golner, makes this comment: "It (*Albanica*) astounds us with the treasures in the collection of the National Library in Tirana, of which many historians do not know", adding that "these publications are also important in regard to the history of books printed in the 15th century."

The place of honour in the collection of antiquities is occupied by books in Albanian written by our ancient authors. Among them are the second and third volumes (1636 and 1664 respectively) of Pjetër Budi's work, *Doktrinë së Krishterë* (The Christian Doctrine), Frano Bardhi's *Dictionary Latino-Epirotium* (1635) and Pjetër Bogdani's *Cuneus Prophetarium*, first published in 1685 and republished in 1691.

Gjon Buzuku's *Meshari* (Masses) (1555), the first book in Albanian, Budi's first publications of *Doktrina Cristiana* (1618), *Passchyra e të refuemit* (Spectrum Confessionis) (1621) and *Rituale Romanum* (1621), Frano Bardhi's work on Skanderbeg, Lek Matranga's and Jul Variboba's works are all kept in photocopies only, since the originals are in the Library of the

Vatican and in the Paris National Library.

This heritage is enriched by the works of the Albanian humanists Barleti and Beçikemi. The first edition of the first work of Barleti *De obsedioni scodrensis* (1504) describing the first and second sieges of the city of Shkodra by Sultan Mohamed II (1474-1475) and (1478-1479) is kept in this library. The author himself took part in war against the Ottoman Turks.

The most important work of Barleti, which immortalized his name, is his *History of Skanderbeg*. The National Library has an almost complete set of volumes of this work. It was first published under the title *Historia de Vita et Getis Scanderbegi, Epirotarum Principis* (1508-1510) and was republished in Augsburg in 1533, in Strassburg in 1537, in Venice in 1554, in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1561, in Lisbon in 1567 and so on. It was also translated into many languages.

In addition to Barleti's book, the National Library has hundreds of other works about our National Hero, Skanderbeg, by such authors as Lavardin, Duponce, Biemmi, Kockert, Menezes, Pontanus, Sarocci, Whincop and others.

The history of our Illyrian ancestors is reflected in the works of ancient Latin and Greek writers, of which the oldest examples in the library are Pliny's *Natural History* printed in 1516, Caesar's Commentaries (1539), Strabo's *De situ orbis, libri XVII* (1549), Aristotle's *Summi Semper Philosophi* (1550) and Diodor Siculi's *Bibliotheca historiae* (1559).

The history of the Middle Ages, together with the Turkish occupation and the struggle of the Albanians for freedom, are dealt with in the works of Byzantine and other chroniclers as well as of various travellers, and our National Library contains *Historiae Bizantinae scriptores tres greco-latini* (1615), *Chronicorum turcicorum* (1578) and individual volumes by Ptolemy, Anna Comnena, Kalkokondili, Sansovino and others.

As Gollner remarked, the collection of ancient books and manuscripts in our National Library is also of particular interest for the study of the history of books in general. In this collection we have incunabula like that of Silvius Piccolomini, published in 1473, hence in the first period of the birth of the printing press. Amongst other things it speaks about Skanderbeg and about the struggle of the Albanians against the Turks. There are also editions of the old Bible and the Koran, books put out by famous

publishing houses, such as that of Aldine (Aldo Malucio) and Elzevir, illuminated books with valuable gold and silver inlaid vellum bindings, decorated with precious stones and filigree, which reflect the history of books at various stages of their development.

With all of these treasures, the section of antiquities of our National Library is a precious heritage and the pride of our people.

### MUSEUM-CITIES

Among the large number and many kinds of monuments, dating from the dawn of history to our days, our museum-cities occupy a special place. The underground of the city of Durrës, the old Bazaar of Kruja, the city of Berat and the city of Gjirokastra have been designated as museum-cities and placed under state protection on the basis of a special decision taken by the Council of Ministers. Special regulations in the spirit of this decision deal with the concrete problems of the administration, the preservation and restoration of these important centres of the history and material culture of our people.

Durrës is one of the most important ancient centres of our country. The new city was built long ago on the ruins of the ancient city founded as early as the 7th century B.C.

Of the ancient and mediaeval structures of this city only part of the defence structures which have resisted the ravages of time are preserved above ground level, for instance, the fortress built in the period of the Byzantine Emperor Anastas I of Durrës origin and a number of mediaeval turrets and walls which date back to the period from the 13th to the 16th centuries. All the other monuments of this city are preserved under the surface of the ground in such density that anywhere you dig you will find traces of them. Through excavations for new buildings, a series of important monuments have been found by chance such as the thermal baths of the Roman period in the centre of the present day city, mosaics, the sewer system of the city and so on. That is why the underground of Durrës has been proclaimed a monument of culture; no new construction is allowed without the approval of the Institute of Monuments of Culture.

The Old Bazaar of Kruja, which dates back to the period from the 18th to the 19th centuries is one of the rare specimens of these

beautiful architectonic complexes which, in the past, were centres of production and trade in our cities. This ensemble is outstanding for its successful functional solution through a simple architecture in which timber occupies the main place. The facades of the shops, which can be dismantled so that they can also serve as displays and the characteristic eaves which, apart from sheltering displayed goods, can protect the buyers from the sun or rain, are made of timber. Thus, the space between the two, long rows of shops covered by the eaves, turns into a sort of open, very picturesque market accessible to the customers. The Kruja Bazaar which was restored during the period from 1965 to 1967 by the Institute of Monuments of Culture, is one of the most interesting and the oldest of its kind preserved in Albania.

The museum-city of Berat is an important centre for the history and material culture of the Albanian people because it preserves structures beginning with the Illyrians as early as the 4th and 3rd centuries BC and ending with historic monuments connected with the National Liberation War. Worthy of mention in this museum-city is the fortress in which we find many kinds of constructions. Apart from Illyrian traces there are also constructions of the 6th, 13th, 15th and 19th centuries. This fortress is one of the biggest of its kind and is distinguished for the great variety of contributions from various epochs. Some cult constructions of the 13th and 14th centuries, some of which also preserve mural paintings are worthy of mention for their architectonic values. The city itself, that is, the residential centre as it is today, belongs partly to the 18th century and even more to the 19th century during which a vigorous process of reconstruction of old houses took place. The ensembles of the museum-city of Berat are distinguished for their close combination with the terrain which is utilized in a masterly way in the compositional volume of the buildings which, joining together, create long strips of buildings. These ensembles stand out for their architectonic coherence and their identical exterior appearance, the balanced horizontal composition and careful integration of separate architectonic elements. The many windows and the arched projections of the residential storey lighten and give variety to the dimensional composition of these compact constructions.

The museum-city of Gjirokastra is younger. Its fortress, a

structure with architectonic values, appears to date back to the 11th and 12th centuries. It was the nucleus of the city which, by the middle of the 17th century, had achieved rapid and vigorous development. Apart from the fortress, the characteristic houses of Gjirokastra, which constitute a specific type within the framework of the Albanian popular house, are of very important value. These houses are distinguished for their development in height and their pronounced monumental character due to their severe outward appearance and cozy and highly ornamented interiors. The ensembles of this city stand out for their accentuated monumental and expressive character, their organic connections with the environment and variety of dimensional composition.

## SPORT

In Albania all the younger generation is involved in sport. This is realized first of all at school, where physical training is one of the main components of the teaching process. The other masses of youth take part in sports according to an extensive calendar, which constitutes the basis for the programme of national and local sports activities. This programme is worked out in detail by every district, work centre, institution, agricultural cooperative and enterprise, in collaboration with the broad masses of youth. It ensures not only the wide variety of sports but also the mass character of participation in them.

Our sports enthusiasts are organized in clubs and collectives on the basis of districts, schools, work centres, agricultural cooperatives and enterprises, institutions or military detachments. These clubs develop their activities by taking part in various championships. Thus, for instance, there are the National Football Championships of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd categories, the National Championships in basketball, volleyball, swimming, shooting, chess, table tennis, classical and free-style wrestling, weight lifting, cycling and so on.

Great progress has been made in athletics, in which boys and girls above 12 years of age compete in various age groups. The young pioneers of both sexes have their own basketball and volleyball championships, and so do the young football players. Today about 90 teams compete in the men's and women's basketball and volleyball championships.

At the "Vojo Kushi" Higher Institute of Physical Culture there is a special branch engaged in training for athletics, gymnastics and football.

Before the liberation of Albania from the invaders and local traitors, only four official sports activities were carried on, namely, football, athletics, swimming and cycling. Only males took part in these activities because the Albanian women and girls were terribly oppressed by the backward feudal customs which prevailed at that time. Those four simple official activities with that very limited number of teams and sportsmen, very quickly (indeed in the first years after liberation), grew to mass activities with the participation of many clubs and thousands of sportsmen and sportswomen. Another telling fact which shows how quickly and in what a revolutionary way our women rejected fanaticism and patriarchy is the great step which they took as far back as 1945, that is, a few months after liberation, when they came out onto the sportsfields and competed in athletics, volleyball, basketball and other sports events.

The maximum figure of those engaged in sports in 1938 was 5,000. During the first year after liberation (1945), 70,000 young men and young women took part in mass road races, mountaineering, organized marches, athletics and other sports events; while in 1960 — 200,000 persons, and in 1972 nearly 1/7th of the entire population of Albania engaged in sport.

Spartakiads are the highest form of sports activities as far as mass participation and quality are concerned. In the First National Spartakiad in 1959 the number of participants was 150,000; in the Second National Spartakiad, this number rose to 200,000 persons, and in the Third it rose to 300,000 persons.

For the development of these sport activities, the people's state power has put considerable funds at the disposal of the younger generation.

All we inherited from the time prior to the triumph of the people's revolution were three sports parks, five practice grounds, and a few football fields and volleyball and tennis courts. During the period from 1945 to 1950 perceptible steps were taken in this field, too. Among others, 2 stadiums, 27 gymsnasiums, 57 practice grounds, 37 football fields etc.; altogether 535 various sports facilities were built, in 1960 we had

1,042; in 1970 — 1,720, and in 1975 — over 2,100 of these. Today there are 21 stadiums and 81 sports centres, 3 sports palaces (two additional ones are under construction) 36 shooting ranges for sports purposes; 375 practice grounds, 271 gymnasiums, 366 football fields, 339 basketball and 476 volleyball courts.

Even in the most remote mountain village, together with the school, the House of Culture and electric lights, you will also find the volleyball court or football field, the shooting or wrestling team. There are villages or administrative localities which have their own stadiums like Narta, Krutje and others, and which compete in sports activities on a national scale.

## REFERENCE NOTE

1. The Albanians are one of the few peoples in Europe for whom there exist two national names, one for internal use and the other by which they are known to the outside world.

The Albanian calls himself **Shqiptar**, his country **Shqipëri**, but from ancient times the Albanian people have been known in the world as **Albanian**, **Albanese**, etc., and the country as **Albania**, **Albanie**. This double appellation has its own reasons. It is connected with certain circumstances of an ethnographic character which are specific to Albania and its historical past.

Proceeding from the facts, it will be observed, first, that although in Albania itself **Shqiptar** is the national name of the people and **Shqipëri** is the name of the country in the Albanian colonies in Italy and Greece, this name is unknown outside. The Albanians in southern Italy and Sicily, descendants of people displaced from Albania mainly during the first wars with the Turks under the command of Gjergj Kastrioti, alias Skanderbeg during the 15th and 16th centuries, call themselves and, in general, the people of their old homeland, **Arbëresh**, and this country, **Arbër**, **Arbëri**. These names are in use to this day by the descendants of those Albanians, who migrated somewhat earlier, during the 14th and 15th centuries, from Albania to Greece, who also use "Arbesh" for Albanian, "Arbërishte" for the Albanian language, "Arbërisht" for Albanian, in the Albanian language. These facts show clearly that during Skanderbeg's time the present name of **Shqiptar**, **Shqipëri** had not yet appeared, or at least was not in general use, and in any case is more recent than the former one. This means that the old national name of the country and the people was **Arbër**, **Arbëresh**. And since this name, as can be seen at a glance is identical with **Albania**, **Albanian**, **Albanese**, etc., mentioned above, from all this it turns out that during the Middle Ages the Albanians called themselves what they are called to this day by the other peoples of the world.

In addition to the Albanian colonies just mentioned, the old name of the country is preserved also in Albania itself. Even today, a region of the plain on the western part of central Albania, between the rivers Mat and Erzen, is called **Arbën**. We come across this name in other parts of Albania, too. The same name in various forms (**Arbën**, **Arbër**, **Arbënesh**, **Arbëresh**, **Arbnuer**, **Arbëror**) is used by the people in an ethnic sense to distinguish the Albanians from the Vlach (Walachian) or other Balkan people.

With the passage of time the old name was superseded by the new name, **Shqiptar**, **Shqipëri**.

The name **Shqiptar**, **Shqipëri**, as the name of the people and the country, came into use during the time of the Turkish occupation, after the emigration of the Albanians to Greece and Italy. Its adoption as a national name and the disappearance of the old name seems to be connected with the ethnic and social movements of the people during the Middle Ages and the early Turkish period, with their internal movements, with the formation of new tribes during that period. But the concrete causes for such a substitution cannot be traced. But it can

be said with relative certainty, that **Shqip** was the name of the Albanian language in the earliest of times. As such it may have been in use earlier, or perhaps parallel with **Arbën**, **Arbër**, as an ethnic name and then the field of its use may have extended to include the people and the country as well. Thus, we notice that the earliest known Albanian writer Gjon Buzuku, of the year 1555, side by side with **ndër Arbënit** (in Albania) also uses **Shqip** (in the Albanian language) just as Pjetër Budi (1621) **Shqip të nje e thoetë**, and Pjetër Bogdani (1683) **një gramatikë latin e shqip**. The ethnic use of this name had taken root by about 1700 because in the Decisions of the Provincial Council in 1706, along with **Arbëni** (Albania and i Arbëreshi (The Albanian) we also come across the language of the **Shqiptarëve**.

In regard to the words **Shqip**, **Shqiptar**, **Shqipëri**, **Shqipni**, from which come the verb **shqipëroj** (explain, make clear), their origin remains in doubt.

(. . . p. 14)





**\$1.50**

Published by:

**NORMAN BETHUNE INSTITUTE**

Printed by:

**PEOPLE'S CANADA PUBLISHING HOUSE**

Distributed by:

**NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS CENTRE**

*Distributors of Progressive Books & Periodicals*

Box 727, Adelaide Stn., Toronto, Ontario, Canada

ISBN 0 8803 034 7